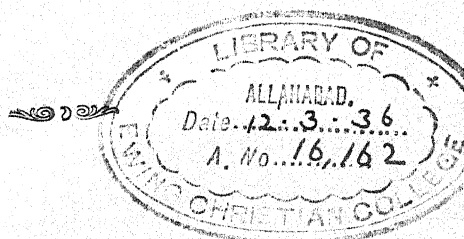


# The Real Sevaji

By

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If an offence come out of the truth, better  
is it that the offence come than that the  
truth be concealed.

St. Jerome.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

English Records on Shivaji ...	E. F. R.
A Source Book of Maratha History ...	S. B. M.
Foreign Biographies of Shivaji ...	F. B. S.

## PREFACE

THIS little book is the outcome of a discussion that took place on the 30th day of April, 1932, between my teacher of Marhatha History, Mr. (now Doctor) Nand Lal Chatterji of Lucknow University, and myself. The subject of our discourse was Sevaji's championship of Hinduism. Mr. Chatterji was referring to the observations of different historians, old as well as new. My views being what they are, I had the temerity to criticize the opinion of a reputed historian of modern times in not very respectful words. What Mr. Chatterji remarked in reply is still fresh in my ears. "Well, Tafazzul", he said, "you are sitting in this room and attacking those who have given their all to the study of history. You should have the courage to tell the world what you are saying here." Generally I am not touchy and Mr. Chatterji is all charity. He had always treated me with great affection and kindness. During the four years of my study under him he had never snubbed me. This rebuke on the last day of the last year of my academic life was more than enough to rouse me to the innermost depth of my heart. Before leaving Mr. Chatterji's house I had resolved to

arrange my ideas about Sevaji as far as they differed with the accepted opinion and present them to the world.

My comments may appear unnecessarily strong to some people. To them I have to offer a few words of apology. In the first place, as has been said, Sevaji 'belongs to no class or caste ; he is a national possession.' Nobody should, therefore, monopolize the writing of his history. Like any other historical figure he belongs to me in Hindustan no less than to any gentleman of Maharashtra. Both of us have the same right to claim and are equally competent to speak on the usefulness or otherwise of this 'national possession.' Secondly, my opinions in regard to Sevaji's character and deeds or the words in which they have been expressed are not materially different from those of Duff, Hunter, and Smith. I am not saying anything new. Moreover, I have stated no facts for which I have not given authority, and used no words, which, or others stronger than which, have not already been used by those whose letters, narratives, etc., have been included in *Foreign Biographies of Shivaji*, *A Source Book of Maratha History*, and *English Records on Shivaji*. In

fact my strictures—I desire it to be noted—are much milder than those contained in the extracts taken from these books. There was no fuss in the country at the time of their publication and I do not see any reason why this book should disturb anyone. Thirdly, I want to make it clear that my attempt has not been animated by any communal or political considerations. Sometimes I say to myself, “Would that some non-Muslim historian had done what I am doing.” However, I have never stepped beyond the recognized limits of the historian’s jurisdiction by making a statement from which a courageous and fair-minded Hindu would have dissociated himself because of its being contrary to the teachings of the Vedas, Puranas, and Gita or any such scriptures of his *ancient* religion as may be expected to control his pen.

It is indeed very unpleasant to state how Marhatha historians have vented their spleen against Muhammadans. But I shall have to do this, there being no other way of contrasting my fair handling of the subject with what really constitutes social offence. Though I have confined myself to my theme, by its very nature I was compelled to refer again and again to



Hindus and Hinduism. But I have never done this with disrespect or inconsideration. Compare my method of treatment with the deliberate attacks of these gentlemen. Aurangzeb, for instance, was known during his life as *Alamgir-zinda Pir* and his name is still remembered to-day with that profound sense of respect which is due only to a saint's memory. But even a man of Mr. Kincaid's refinement and literary attainments, not to speak of Takakhav and Savarkar, went so far out of his way as to impute treachery and a "thousand basenesses" to him. In any case my remarks cannot be said to be more objectionable.

Below I give some passages from another illustrious writer :

(1) "From the Himalayas to the sea, wherever the Hindu arms met those of the Muhammadans after 1627, the Hindus were sure to win and the Muhammadans *sure to lick the dust*, whatever be their strength or however tumultuous were their war cries of *Allah-ho-Akbar* : God be victorious ! God doubtless proved victorious, but it was the Hindu God. After 1627, one finds God definitely enlisted on the Hindu side—on the side of the image worshipper, and

setting his face sternly against the image breaker."

(2) "... the day that witnessed the forces of the '*Haribhaktas*' of Hindudom, enter Delhi in triumph and Muslim throne and crown and standard lay hammered and rolling in dust at the feet of Bhau and Vepishvas in 1761 A.D. was the day which made an honourable unity between the Hindus and Muslims more or less feasible."

(4) "To our Muhammadan readers, however, a word of explanation is needed. The duty of a historian is primarily to depict, as far as possible the feelings, motives, emotions, and actions of the actors themselves whose deeds he aims to relate. A writer on the life of Muhammad, for example, would be wanting in his duty, if he tries to smoothen down the *fierce* attacks on 'Idolatory' and the *dreadful* threats held before the 'unbelievers' by that *heroic* Arab . . . there is a corresponding obligation on the part of those of his readers who do not fully or at all contribute to the teachings of Muhammadan faith, which they owe to the writer. They too ought to know that an author who in the discharge of his duties as a historian of yesterday, of Muhammad, Babar or Aurangzeb, depicts their aspirations and deeds in all their moods, *fierce* or otherwise, faithfully

and even gloriously, or even appreciatingly, need not necessarily be wanting in the discharge of his duties as a citizen of to-day . . . ”

(4) “Then they (Marhathas) . . . marched on the very capital of the Muslim Empire, and knocked mightily at its gate. The blustering *maulanas* and *maulvis*, who till then had ever been busy in convincing themselves and forcing others to get convinced of the truth of the Koran by citing political victories of Islamite arms over the forces of the followers of the Puran, saw to their utter dismay that the Hindus, in spite of their caste and creed, their image worship and beardless chin, knocked down the gates of Delhi, and advancing in irresistible might, planted the *Geruva* on all the strong-holds of Islam. No Zebraïl came to contest the triumph of Puran over Qoran, as in days of old the Muslims fancied he was wont to do. No longer could it be said that the victory which attended the arms of the Muslims was one of the most convincing proofs of the truth of the Muslim faith ; that the dust of the temples bore witness to the falsity of the teachings of the Hindu Faith. The temple towered high above the Mosque. The crescent waned and gasped for its life . . . Aurangzeb had snorted out ‘Rats’; the rats bearded the lion in



his own den and pulled out his claws and teeth one by one; the cows killed the butcher; even as our Guru Govind foretold, the hawks were hacked to pieces by the sparrows."

These extracts have been taken from V. D. Savarkar's *Hindu-Pad-Padshahi*, published by B. G. Paul and Co, Madras. 'Muslim bigotry,' 'Muslim fanaticism' and 'Muslim fury,' and many such expressions have been so commonly used and have so thoroughly demoralized the English educated Muhammadans that there are very few who are not oblivious of their implications. But who will believe that a history of Sevaji and Baji Rao contains such slashing attacks on not only the Muslims of to-day, but also on their ancestors, their religion, their Prophet and everything else they love and revere ?

Mr. Sarvarkar's views, however, do not command respect outside Maharashtra, and Muhammadans have little reason to expect consideration from one according to whom the Marhatha history was a 'giant and mighty protest' against the deeds of their own ancestors. But it is truly woeful that even those who should know that they owe impartial justice to their Muhammadan countrymen show the same want of restraint and moderation. A very reputed historian

of modern times, whose name my pen refuses to write, observes :

“Outside their [the Muhammadans'] own realms, the destruction of temples and the slaughter of Hindus sanctified every war of aggression. Thus a frame of mind was produced in the Muslim community which habitually regarded plunder and homicide as the purest of human acts, as exertion in the path of God . . . The murder of infidels (Kafir Kushi) is counted a merit in a Muslim. It is not necessary that he should tame his own passions or mortify his flesh to grow a rich growth of spirituality. He has only to slay a certain class of his fellow-beings or plunder their lands and wealth, and this act in itself would raise his soul to heaven. A religion whose followers are taught to regard robbery and plunder as a religious duty, is incompatible with the progress of mankind or with the peace of the world.”

The same learned historian describes Sevaji's robbery, without calling him robber, and plundering, without calling him plunderer, in about four hundred pages, and then seeks to justify them on the ground that they were sanctified by Sanskrit law books and the Muslim Quranic law. Says he :

"The coincidence between Shivaji's foreign policy and that of a Quranic sovereign is so complete that both the history of Shivaji by his courtier Krishnaji Anant and the Persian official history of Bijapur use exactly the same word, *mulkgiri*, to describe such raids into the neighbouring countries as a regular political ideal . . . ."

"Thus, Shivaji's power was exactly similar in origin and theory to the power of the Muslim States in India and elsewhere, and he only differed from them in the use of that power. Universal toleration and equal justice and protection were the distinctive features of the permanently occupied portion of his realm, as we have shown elsewhere."

Apart from the impropriety and unjustifiability of these offensive remarks, it is obvious that the learned historian could have expressed himself as well in much less provoking words. The axiom of judging a tree from its fruits when transferred from the plant kingdom to the affairs of men becomes argumentum ad ignorantiam. I have dealt with Sevaji's robbery, plundering, and homicide, but I am neither so ignorant as to believe, nor so irresponsible as to assert, that they

drew their inspiration from the teachings of his humane religion.

I am grateful to all those well—wishers, especially my friend Mr. Akhlaque Husain, Barrister, of Lucknow, who dissuaded me from publishing this book, pointing out that it was likely to prejudice the Hindu public against me. I cannot afford to lose the sympathy of anyone in the world ; much less of those amidst whom I live and on whose good-will I must depend for my sustenance. But I do not see any genuine cause of grievance against me.

There is not much to be said in regard to the non-Marhatha Hindus. Their uneducated had not even heard Sevaji's name some years ago and their educated of older generation, who have received their lessons from the books of Europeans or from translations of those books, have been themselves taught to regard Sevaji's deeds as detestable. The mere imputation that he pretended to fight for Hinduism was not enough to elevate his name to any spiritual grandeur. It is only the younger generation whose condition causes anxiety. Their minds are being poisoned more and more ; but fortunately the mischief is not

yet past remedy and this book may produce some antidotal effect.

As for Marhatha readers, they are requested to read these pages without imputing any bad motive because of my religion. They will find every allegation substantiated and satisfactorily proved. In this book I have merely attempted to prove that Sevaji was unworthy of being adored by the Hindus, without implying any attack on them or their religion. It is indeed a pity that any section of the Hindus who have given to the world in olden days philosophers and thinkers, who possess such an inexhaustible source of noble inspiration in the history of the Rajputs, and who are still capable of producing men like Gokhale, Gandhi, and Tagore, should be so passionately attached to that man whose character and deeds have been described in the fifth chapter of this book.

The mischievous interpretation of Sevaji's career has widened and deepened the cleft of communal differences more than anything else. The numerous Sevaji memorials offer an index of the latent growth of antagonistic communalism amongst the Marhatha people. It is the duty of every nationalist, whether Hindu or Muhammadan, to attempt to kill this hydra-headed monster.

Therefore, trusting to the good sense and fair-mindedness of my Hindu brethren, I am publishing this book with the earnest hope that by removing a potent source of evil it will go ultimately a long way toward restoring the national harmony and communal concord.

It would be an act of ingratitude if I do not express my obligation to those who are responsible for the publication of *English Records on Shivaji*, *Foreign Biographies of Shivaji*, and the *Source Book of Maratha History*. These have given me immense help. Though many of those narratives which appear in them are available elsewhere also, for the sake of convenience I have given references to these books only. However, I am indebted to Prof. Jadunath Sarkar more than to anyone else. In the absence of his book, which has been rightly asserted by him to be definite and definitive with regard to facts and dates, especially the bibliography, I should not have thought of writing on Sevaji. In fact mine is only the logical corollary of his work. I am saying what ought to have formed part of his own conclusions. Our points of difference are not many, but they relate to such matters as are likely to engage the attention not only of scholars but also of the general public.

I have criticized some of his opinions frankly but this does not mean that I do not hold him in respect. His industry and enthusiasm will always remain, as they have been for many years, a source of inspiration to me.

This book is by no means intended to be the last word on the subject it deals with. My circumstances do not permit me to aspire so high. I frankly confess that although unused to writing in English I have not been able to give as much attention to its language as I might have wished. My only satisfaction is that I am placing before the historically minded reader something not unworthy of being considered, which may guide an abler man with better opportunities to produce a more useful work.

Mufti Fakhr-ul-Islam Saheb, B.A., LL. B., Vakil, of Allahabad deserves to be thanked. He has helped me in various ways. He and other members of his noble family have always had very great affection for me. In the last three months, as before, when this book was in the press and I was required to pay frequent and sometimes prolonged visits to Allahabad, I have enjoyed their hospitality on numerous occasions.

Lastly I must thank the men of Popular Printing Works, especially the Manager, MR. M. S. AKBAR KHAN, for giving me every facility they were capable of. I was allowed to read and correct proofs as many times as I liked. The many errors which still remain are due to the inherent defects of the manuscript, my inexperience of proof reading, and the alterations made in proofs. Misprints reflect discredit on the printing press, but in this case the author himself is mainly responsible. I must apologize for them. About half the book when given to the press was not even revised, and was altogether unfit for being printed. As proofs came it began to appear that the whole thing required remodelling. Innumerable alterations had to be made with that view which in addition to spoiling the style of writing must have caused considerable embarrassment to them.

Tafazzul Daud.

*19th November, 1935*







# The Real Sevaji

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## CHAPTER I

### THE ARGUMENT

LIKE other branches of academic learning our knowledge of Indian History, as it is popularly understood, is derived principally from the fruits of European research. It was a band of enthusiastic workers from the West that first undertook to write systematically the account of India's past, forgotten as well as remembered. For a very long time their works only used to be taught to our students in schools and colleges, making them see the deeds and making them examine the institutions of our ancestors in the light of purely western ideas and in accordance with exclusively western standards. These scholars, not always without honest efforts on their part, often failed to see clearly and depict truly the annals and antiquities of our country. Sometimes the misrepresentation was due to the paucity of the historical material available to them or to the want of true apprehension, right understanding, and correct appreciation of

Indian conditions and circumstances ; while on other occasions, different considerations, not excluding political motives, made conscious attempt in the same direction more desirable to them. The evil was further aggravated by the indiscriminate use of unhappy words and ill-chosen expressions.

It could then have been reasonably expected that matters might improve when Indians themselves with a better knowledge of their country's traditions and its social and political outlook should take up the task as a labour of love and honestly and truthfully present to the world the picture of their past. These expectations were fulfilled, but only in part. Though many old theories have been exploded, and many uncertainties and vagaries cleared, many still hold, attracting one's attention insistently and persistently. Some have indeed, gained fresh strength in the mean time. In fact, in some respects things have become worse and the process of extracting a grain of truth from a bushel of chaff has made confusion worse confounded. For example, it is still urged, and with greater force than ever, that Akbar was an enemy of Islam ; and every school boy blames Aurangzeb to-day that he paved the way for the downfall of the

Moghal Empire by alienating for ever the sympathies of the Hindus from the house of his great-grandfather. Again, the same Emperor is accused of having been cruelly harsh to the Shias, whom he is said to have held in contempt due to their beliefs, for which reason alone he is said to have put an end to the Sultanates of Bijapur and Golkonda ; more than ever Sevaji is praised to-day for the services and the sacrifices said to have been made by him for the cause of religion and motherland. For the moment I confine myself to the last mentioned.

Of all those persons who have played any important part in the history of India, Sevaji is the most popular figure to-day with by far the most numerous section of the Indian population. His deeds are applauded and his actions looked upon with a mixture of awe and admiration. His very name is a source of inspiration to Hindus in general, and to those of Maharashtra in particular. Historians have spent their lives in studying his character and achievements. Researchers are busy in ' unearthing ' documents and sifting historical materials, generally hitherto unavailable by virtue of having never existed in the past. Novelists have chosen as their themes the scenes of his deeds and exploits. Short

story writers have taken it upon themselves to contribute to journals and magazines articles based on his acts of daring and chivalry. Poets and bards are marching in the same direction, composing and singing from door to door poems dealing with the heroic deeds of the great Maharashtrian. In short, to-day the whole atmosphere is surcharged with what may be called the 'Sevaji spirit'.

The popular imagination pictures him in his childhood as sometimes chastising a 'butcher in the very streets of a Muhammadan metropolis for the very common offence of cow-slaughter'; or fancies how 'smarting under the disgrace of Muhammadan dependence and trying to liberate his motherland and co-religionists from the intolerable tyranny of the mlechchas, [he] boldly refused to salute the non-Hindu Sultan of Bijapur, heedless of the earnest expostulations of his timid father.' His youth brings him swearing solemnly in the company of his guardian and comrades 'in the presence of God on the summits of Sahyadari to fight to a finish and establish Hindvi Swaraj,' a Hindu Pad-padshahi in Hindustan. As a grown man he appears in grim fights waged against the dreadful Yavanas of Bijapur and Delhi. Then again he

comes initiating the Shuddhi movement by re-admitting apostates into the Hindu-fold. He, 'a great warrior and mighty conqueror,' for the righteousness of his great purpose and the intensity of patriotic fervour is likened to Bruce, Alfred, and William Tell ; and for his superior military genius and statesmanship is compared with, and sometimes found superior to, Hannibal, Alexander, Caesar and Bonaparte.

To him is given the credit of vindicating the liberties of the land of the Bhartas ; of creating a burning desire of extirpating the Muslim power, and of delivering the children of the soil from the shackles of Muhammadan tyrannies and oppressions. Some of his admirers hold that Sevaji's aim was to found an independent Hindu state in Maharashtra ; while others vehemently protest and claim that his ambition was not confined to his own province only, but that he intended to capture Delhi, subdue the whole of India, 'liberate the Ganges from the yoke of tribute, extend the Empire beyond the Attock', and completely overthrow the Muhammadan hegemony. He aspired, it is alleged with great serenity, to emancipate his brethren from the long night-mare of Muhammadan thralldom, to restore the Hindu paramountcy, and found a

great and glorious Hindu Swaraj destined to last for all times to come. It is asserted that according to him Hindustan was for the Hindus only, and that the Hindus alone had the right to rule here.

He is called a 'liberator of the Maratha nation', a 'deliverer of the Hindu race', and an 'irresistible conqueror of the foeman of his *desh* and *dharma*'; and is chiefly remembered to-day as a strong defender of temples, a powerful saviour of Brahmins, and a staunch protector of cows. He appeared in the 17th century, it is claimed, as a nation builder, as a representative man of the age, as the author of a momentous national revival, as the director and the entrepreneur of the forces of religious liberty and political independence, and as the 'dazzling sun of a new hope before whom all ugly shadows melted away'. He has been called a chosen champion of his people, a chosen hero of his race, a chosen instrument of God, a super-human being, a divine agency, an incarnation of the deity himself. His countrymen still pay divine honour to his images at Raigarh and Malwan; and the present representative of his family still worships his three weapons, the bloody *Bhawani* sword, the scorpion-like *bichwa*,



and the deadly *baghnakh*, instrumental in murdering Afzal Khan.\*

In appreciation of the services claimed to have been rendered by him, Sevaji's name has been commemorated in a hundred ways. A Shivaji Magazine was started; Shivaji calendars are circulated ; Shivaji matches manufactured; Shivaji statues raised ; Shivaji temples erected ; a Shivaji memorial committee was formed; Shivaji Tercentenary Anniversary and Shivajyanti celebrated ; Shivaji Memorial Series published ; Shiva Charitra Karyalay instituted ; Shivaji Memorial Chhattri built ; Shri Shivaji Preparatory Military Corps organized; and Shri Shivaji Preparatory Military School and Shri Shivaji Memorial Hall founded. It would appear that a ' Shivaji ' movement has been started and that movement being now in its full swing is affecting not only the outlook of the people of Maharashtra but that of the great Hindu community in its entirety.

So far there is nothing objectionable from our point of view. Every people has a right to remember an individual in any way that it thinks fit. It should matter little for others whether that particular individual in

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\*See Sen's Siva Chhatrapati, page 18, footnote.

his own day was a just king and a benevolent ruler or a ruthless plunderer and a cruel devastator. But here, unfortunately, it is not so. A most unhappy result of all this is that the self-styled as well as the genuine Marhathas of this generation—the proud descendants of Sevaji's countrymen—have come to regard themselves as the traditional opponents of the Indian Musalmans; so much so that Dr. B.S. Moonje\* described the effect produced on him by the acquaintance of the Moplah rising of 1921-22 by saying that it 'made his Maratha blood boil.' This is not all : for some time the contagion has been spreading fast in all directions.

However, we must revert to our own theme. These few pages are being written with a view to expose the real nature of Sevaji's deeds and achievements. They are addressed to historians as well as laymen. We shall begin by examining collectively the merits as well as demerits of the different sources of information—Marhathi, Persian, and European—neither exaggerating their failings nor over-estimating their advantages. Next it is proposed to consider at some length the true nature of the services that Sevaji has

rendered to his religion and motherland, examining them more particularly in the light of the contemporaneous evidence, and to show how incompatible are the views of presentday historians with the impressions of those who actually saw Sevaji or set down their opinions while he was still alive or was not at least long dead. The latter being the most competent judges of his motives, intentions and actions, it is submitted, their evidence should carry the fullest weight, and be sufficient to remove any notions, which despite their having been cherished dearly, are none the less false. It will be then, and not till then, that we shall be able to have an estimate of the real Sevaji, his character, his achievements, and the place that he so conspicuously occupied in the latter part of the 17th century. Lastly we shall consider the testimony of different contemporary writers with respect to the question of his murdering Afzal Khan, and show how erroneous is the interpretation and how untenable the contention of Sevaji's apologists.

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## CHAPTER II

## THE SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The records of Sevaji's times exist not only in Persian and Marhathi but also in some of the European languages, especially English and French. Though the evidential value of the latter sources is not as great as that of the Persian sources, yet, for different reasons, they are equally indispensable. The Persian records consist of state-papers, official and unofficial detailed histories, letter books, etc. Most of them represent the Moghal point of view; but there are a few which mainly deal with the affairs of the kings of the Deccan and their courts. They frequently refer to Sevaji's doings and throw clear light on his character and deeds. Taken together they are so copious that not only are they by themselves sufficient to determine his place in history, but a biography of Sevaji based on them alone will be a fairly faithful record of his life. The European languages come next. Here the historical material is mainly contained in the narratives of travellers and the letters, diaries, etc., of the English, French and Dutch factors. Though not always as reliable as the Persian records, yet the value of these is very great.

They not only materially corroborate the Persian accounts, but very often supply additional information. But for these European sources certain obscurities would have never come to light. Often they record hearsay; but the hearsay evidence of a contemporary has a value of its own. Marhathi was the mother-tongue of Sevaji but the records in it are very disappointing. The paucity of genuine historical materials is surprising: more striking is the abundance of fabricated *bakhars* and forged documents. Forgeries and fabrications set apart, what remains is exceedingly interesting, though not equally reliable. Having made these introductory remarks we proceed to discuss at some length the intrinsic value and the comparative worth of all these sources one by one.

The chief merit of the Persian accounts consists in depicting the ebb and flow of the main political tides. The remaining two sources cannot give any idea of hopes and fears which Sevaji's raids and robberies excited at the courts of Delhi, Bijapur, and Golkonda and the general repercussions created abroad. Secondly, they alone describe truly the relations of the Marhatha chief with other powers of the land, the various stages of his political growth, and

the fluctuations in the policies of different generals and statesmen pursued against him from time to time. They are generally reliable and seldom record bazaar gossip. But for a historian of to-day this is not always an unmixed blessing. If, on the one hand, their version can be accepted without any misgiving, on the other, it is impossible to say on their basis alone what, apart from the inferences to be drawn from important events, was commonly felt and believed about him, and what was his exact position in the estimation of the public at large. They speak of his treachery, cruelty, and free-booting ; but, unlike what some European writers occasionally do, they do not enter into the details of his movements and their inseparable accidents. Hence their accounts do not reflect the character of Sevaji as faithfully as the letters, diaries, etc., of the English and French factors. Again, writing from a great distance, they are incapable of depicting adequately the ruin and desolation caused by him. For these also one must go to the European accounts. The Persian records differ with those in Marhathi in this that, unlike the latter, their genuineness and authenticity may not be doubted. Generally they are to be presumed genuine and authentic. However, the

*farmans* and other state-papers which come from the side of Maharashtra are to be viewed with caution.

In this enquiry we have confined ourselves to the question of the sacrifices and services that Sevaji is claimed to have rendered to his religion and motherland, his treachery or otherwise in killing Afzal Khan, and certain features of his character which in our opinion have not been correctly understood and properly sketched by modern writers. All accounts in Persian agree with one another in this that they do not make reference to anything that may be construed by the widest stretch of imagination as an act of service to the Hindus in general or even to those of Maharashtra. They are united in accusing him of treacherously murdering Afzal Khan. Further, all of them without a single exception decry his perfidy, cruelty and rapacity. But as these writers were generally, not always, Muhammadans, and as the Marhatha historians think that they smarting 'under a sense of loss by reason of the sensational escapades and stratagems of Shivaji should in season and out of season revile his memory\*' their evidence should be kept out of consideration, and not

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\*The Life of Shivaji Maharaj by Takakhav and Keluskra, page 572.

be allowed to influence our judgment. Thus, though the materials supplied by the Persian writers are of the highest value, still in deference to the prejudices of Marhatha historians we shall examine the character of Sevaji and consider the nature of his achievements without making any quotations from them.\*

Therefore, deeming it unnecessary to speak of them any more, we proceed to discuss the merits of the records existing in European languages.

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\*The following lines taken from an article of Prof. Jadunath Sarkar published in the **Modern Review** of May, 1924, page 567 will be read with interest :

"I have sometimes found Maratha writers objecting to the evidence of Persian records on the ground that the Moghuls were the enemies of the Marhathas. This objection is childish. If all Persian evidence is to be rejected summarily as the work of the enemies, then it logically follows that all evidence in the Marathi language should be rejected as summarily on the ground of its being tainted by national partiality. The true historian's duty is to sift evidence, compare and correct it by concentrating light from every available source. It is also forgotten by these modern Maratha writers that all the Persian histories were not written by Muslims, many of them are the works of the contemporary Hindus who had a warm place in their hearts for Shivaji. Again, many of these unofficial histories and all the 'akhbarats' were written by private persons and not meant for the Emperor or his officers' eyes. Hence they could venture to tell many an unpalatable truth."

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The 19th century scholars do not seem to have fully realized the importance of European accounts. Of these for a historian of Sevaji the records of English factories on the Malabar Coast, a considerable portion of which have already been published, are of very great value. They cover a great part of Sevaji's activities and are absolutely indispensable for one who wants to study his life in all its minute details. A big volume of English Factory Letters and Consultations, which bring the affairs of Sevaji into the light, has been edited by Mr. B. G. Paranjpe and published by Shiva Charitra Karyalay as "*English Factory Records on Sevaji*." Its 729 closely printed pages of  $20 \times 26$  include over a thousand letters and eleven extracts from histories and contemporary narratives. Here one must not forget to mention two more attempts of more or less the same kind, i.e., Dr. S. N. Sen's *Foreign Biographies of Shivaji*, and *A Source Book of Marhatha History*, Volume 1, edited by Messrs. Patwardhan and Rawlinson. Dr. Sen has confined himself to the foreigners, but Patwardhan, and Rawlison have made selections from our own writers also. These three volumes taken together practically bring out everything about Sevaji which is necessary for the purposes

of our research. Their translators, editors, and publishers deserve unbounded praise. These are such veritable mines of information that no researcher can now proceed with his work at once easily and honestly without making very frequent references to them.

But neither these gentlemen themselves nor other historians seem to have realized up to this time the true significance of those materials which these volumes have brought out. Would that they had revised their opinion about Sevaji in the light of the views of those very writers whose accounts they have published. Mr. Paranjpe took the trouble to examine Sevaji's championship of Hinduism in the light of English Factory Records. But as he was himself disappointed, he seems to have tried to mislead others. In the beginning of his introduction to the *English Factory Records on Sevaji* he says "This selection is made with an eye only on topics of political importance. Anybody trying to write the social, religious or the economic history of the time of Shivaji will have to go through the records over again for himself."\* It is needless to say that Mr. Paranjpe's

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\*English Factory Records on Shivaji; Introduction  
page ii.

selections throw ample light on the economic conditions of the Deccan as they were in the times of Sevaji. His aim is to create an impression in the mind of his readers that in the archives of the India Office Library there are still such unpublished documents as tell of the religious and social conditions of those times but from them he has wilfully omitted to make selection. The public opinion about Sevaji being what it is, his words would, he seems to hope, lead people to believe that the English Records also testify to Sevaji's glorious services to Hinduism, but such of them have not been published as yet. However, for one who is familiar with the usual tactics of the historians of Maharashtra such weapons are wholly ineffective. In the first place, why have not such extracts, if there were any, been included in this volume? From the Marhatha point of view they would have added very greatly to the value and usefulness of the book. Secondly, Mr. Paranjpe's own disappointment, which is too apparent, points out unmistakably the reason for his forming such a poor opinion about the foreign records. Thirdly, he himself writes on page xl of the same introduction: "For the first time we are presenting to the public verbatim copies of *all* (italicised

by Mr. Paranjpe himself) the extracts concerning Shivaji which are to be found in the India Office." Obviously, this second statement is clear and truthful, and the first distorted, misleading, and calculated to create a wrong impression. It is extremely improbable that there should be any document in the India Office which is inconsistent with the materials contained in this volume, or which may create notions about the social, economic, and religious conditions of those times different from those which a reader of these extracts must necessarily form. Far from strengthening Sevaji's championship of Hinduism they rather tend to shake it. The fact is that too much enthusiasm coupled with overconfidence in the theory of championship, which since the day it was first propounded has remained unchallenged, led the said *Karyalay* in a moment of unwisdom to decide to publish the English records at such cost and labour as must have been necessarily required.

The first and foremost thing to be noted about the European records is their genuineness. No one has ever ascribed the authorship of any work belonging to this class to any one other than the person whose name it bears as the author of it. We have not heard of any docu-

ment in English, French, or any other European language being labelled forged. But if things remain as they are now, before long someone may 'discover' a proto-type of Shivadigvijay in some of the European languages also. As has already been said, even the Persian documents coming from the side of Maharashtra are not always free from suspicion. But one may accept as genuine without any misgiving all letters, diaries, and accounts of the factors and travellers that have been published up to this time. All of them are unimpeachable from this point of view. None of the numerous admirers of the Marhatha chieftain seems to have ventured forgery in this quarter. Nor does any one of the old documents in the said languages appear to have suffered from subsequent alterations or interpolations.

As far as their authenticity is concerned one cannot do better than to quote the words of Prof. Jadunath Sarkar. He writes about the English factory records :

"The records of the English factories on the Bombay Coast and inland are of the highest value for dates and facts. Sometimes the factors frankly confess that the reports that they have heard and are writing down immediately are so contradictory that they know not what to believe. But, on the other hand, the English of Rajapur and Karwar employed paid spies who travelled in Shivaji's dominions and brought back news of his doings and his plans; the informations from

the different factories helped to check and correct one another and a false rumour is usually followed by its contradiction. Above all the factory records have the supreme merit of having been preserved in the original manuscript without any later garbling or interpolation\* ”.

To what Prof. Sarkar says I have to add this that occasionally the factors' criticism also, on matters political as well as economic, is no less valuable. Some of them were undoubtedly men of learning and culture. Their letters, etc., prove not only their shrewdness as men of business but also their capability of forming correct views even on broad issues of politics. They not only speak of Sevaji's thefts and robberies but also of their immediate and far-reaching consequences. No one has tried to study the economic deterioration of the country as caused by Sevaji's robberies. These records offer a promising field to any student of the economic conditions of the Deccan as they were in the times of Sevaji and the forces to which they were subject from time to time. Again, they mention not only his plundering raids but also their moral effect on the country.

The above remarks mainly apply to the factory records. The accounts of the travellers are often unreliable. The latter generally record

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\*Sarkar's Shivaji, 3rd Ed., page 412.

hearsay. But, as has already been pointed out, even in the hearsay evidence of a contemporary there is always something illuminating. However, their chief value consists in proving what was commonly felt and believed about him by those who were affected by his doings, and occasionally giving the lie direct to the assertions of the modern admirers of the Marhatha chieftain. It would be interesting to compare the views about Sevaji of the common-folk of the 17th century, unmistakably reflected in the accounts of the European travellers, with the present day notions of the same class. The contrast should not surprise anybody for the present state of affairs has been created by continued and systematic propaganda.

The European records are generally silent in regard to Sevaji's alleged services and sacrifices for Hinduism. This fact is inexplicable and therefore in the present circumstances significant. This is only the general impression created by a cursory reading. But when one goes through them minutely one comes across such passages and such references as cut at the very root of the theory of championship. On the issue of his killing Afzal Khan all of them have held Sevaji guilty of a treacherous murder. However, Prof. Jadunath



Sarkar has attempted to put a different interpretation to that letter of the English factors of Rajapur in which the incident has been related. It will be shown in the 4th Chapter that he is mistaken. As for Sevaji's character, there is no species of vice except indolence and debauchery for which he has not been blamed by them. "Cruel", "perfidious", and "Villain" are some of their favourite words for him.

It may not be out of place to say here that we have conducted our enquiry principally on the foundations of the European records.

It has been claimed about certain scholars of Maharashtra that they dedicated their very being to the study of Marhatha History. May it be true. But it cannot be gain-said that no one has studied Sevaji so systematically and so thoroughly as Prof. Jādunath Sarkar. Not only is his work decidedly the most successful attempt of its kind; in fact, it is the only book on Sevaji that has been compiled after proper scientific investigation. Though the whole of the book, barring a few controversial topics to be noticed in the coming pages, has been written very ably, it is for the bibliography attached to it that historians should be specially thankful to him. To give our readers an idea of the real worth of

the Marhatha sources, we cannot do better than to reproduce verbatim its Marhathi section. It will not only prove the paucity of the genuine historical materials in Marhathi but will also show how the misguided enthusiasm and misplaced industry of Sevaji's admirers have produced a big mass of wholly unreliable forged material.

## SOURCES\*

### A.—MARATHI

101. Shiva-Chhatrapati-chen Charitra by Krishnaji Anant Sabhasad, written in 1694, at Jinji, by order of Rajaram ; edited by K. N. Sane, 3rd ed. 1912. A small book of barely 100 pages, composed from memory without the help of written memoranda or documents. The events are not arranged in the order of time. Some of the statements are incorrect. Weak in topography, no dates. Language very condensed and sometimes obscure.

But the most valuable Marathi account of Shivaji and our main source of information from the Marathi side. Later biographies in the same language have mostly copied this Sabhasad Bakhar and padded out their source (Sabhasad) by means of Sanskrit quotations, miracles, rhetorical flourishes, emotional gush, and common-place remarks and details added from the probabilities of the case or from pure imagination. [In Sane's 4th edition the text has been very unwisely mixed up.]

Translated into English by J. L. Mankar as *Life and Exploits of Shivaji* (Bombay, 1st ed., 1884, 2nd ed., 1886).

\*Sarkar's *Shivaji*, 3rd ed., pages 412—415.

102. Chitra-Gupta Bakhar, composed about 1760; contains merely Sabhasad's facts (and even language), interspersed with copious extracts from the Sanskrit scriptures. **Useless**

103. Shiva-Chhatrapati-Chen : Sapta-prakaran-atmak Charitra, written by Malhar Ram Rao Chitnis in 1810, and edited by N. J. Kirtane, 2nd Ed., 1894. Incorrect, rambling or pure guess-work in many places. No state-paper used, no idea of correct chronology. Muhammadan names grossly incorrect and anachronistic. Moro Pant is perpetually conquering and having to conquer again "twenty-seven forts in Baglana, etc." (pages 41, 71, 124 and 176)! **Worthless modern fabrication.**

104. Shivadigvijay, edited or published by P. R. Nandurbarkar and L. K. Dandekar (Baroda, 1895). Falsely described as written by Khando Ballal (the son of Shivaji's secretary Balaji Avji) in 1718 **Fabricated by a writer familiar with the style of modern vernacular novels written by imitators of Bankim Chandra Chatterji.** Too much gush (especially pages 433, 208, 444), rhetorical padding and digression. The author speaks of an English general being present at Shivaji's coronation (page 435) and of goods from Calcutta being used in decorating his hall in 1674 (page 417)!!! Shiva bows to his mother two years after her death (page 296)! Tanaji Malusare visits Haidarabad seven years after his death! (page 301)!

105. Shivapratap (Baroda), **an utterly worthless modern fabrication**; does not even claim to be old.

106. Shrimant Maharaj Bhonsle-nanchi Bakhar [or Shedgaon, published by V. L. Bhawe (Thana, 1917). **Utterly worthless expansion of Sabhasad with forged letters and imaginary details.**

107-8. Two alleged old Bakhars (called More-Yanchi Choti Bakhar and Mahabaleshwar-chi Juni Mahiti) published in Parásnis's Itihas Sangraha, Sfuta Iekh, i, 21—29 and ii, 9-12.

**Full of palpable historical errors and deliberate fabrication** (probably of the same factory and date as No. 106).

109. *Jedhe yanchi Shakavali*, edited by B. G. Tilak in Chaturtha Sammelan Britta (Puna). A bare record of events with dates, kept by the Jedhe family of Bhor (Puna district).

The Shivapur Deshpandes have preserved two Shakavalis, one in their Yadi (very short) and the other in their Bahi. I have secured a transcript of the very large Shivapur Deshpande Shakavali preserved in the library of the Bombay Royal Asiatic Society (Forbes collection). The above three Shakavalis as well as three others are printed in *The Shiva-Charitra Pradip* (a very useful book) which also gives the Jedhe Karina (an amplification of the Shakavali from the purely family point of view). An uncorrected English translation of the Jedhe Shakavali and Karina is given in the *Shivaji Souvenir*.

110. *Sanads and letters*, edited by P. W. Mawjee and D. B. Parasnis (1913), and

111. *Marathyan-cha-Itihasachin-Sadhanen*, edited by V. K. Rajwade and others; Vols. VIII and XV—XXIV contain a few political letters and a vast mass of private legal documents and charters of Shivaji and his times. **Some of them are clearly forgeries made to deceive the Inam Commission and other judicial bodies. Some others seem to have been faked to support "popular" history or family prestige.** Many documents of this class have been also printed in the Annual Proceedings (Varshik Itibritta), Conference Reports (Sammelani Britta) and Quarterly (Triniasik) of the Bharat Itihas Samshodhak Mandal of Puna in the *Shiva-Charitra-Pradip*, (1925), *Shiva-Charitra-Sahitya* (edited by K. V. Purandare, 1926). *Itihas Ani Aitihasik*, Vol. 5 (edited by Rajwade, *Shiva Samsmriti* ed. by V. L. Bhawe, 1928, *Marathi Daftar and Shivaji Souvenir* (English translation), edited by G. S. Sardesai (1929).

112. Powadas, or Marathi ballads, collected by H. A. Acworth and S. T. Shaligram, 2nd (really 3rd) Ed., 1911. All legendary and of a much later date than Shivaji's life-time. The Afzal Khan ballad is the oldest, and probably belonged to Shambhuji's reign. Only two of the ballads deal with Shivaji, but are unhistorical. A new and critical edition by Y. N. Kelkar (1927).

English translation of ten of the ballads (with an excellent introduction) by Acworth (Longman's 1894).

113. Savant-vadi-Samsthancha Itihas, by V. P. Pingulkar (1911), useful; but the dates of some of the Persian farmans have been wrongly transcribed, and the seal has been incorrectly ascribed to the Emperor (whose name stands on the top of it) instead of to owner of the seal (whose name is modestly put below that of the Emperor).

114. Ajna-patra of Kam Chandra Amatya, 2nd Ed., 1923. A book of "good counsels", but **not a genuine** document by a contemporary of Shivaji. Throws no real light.

115. V. L. Bhave published a number of pamphlets on incidents of Shivaji's life, which, in spite of their minute and lawyer like argument, are vitiated by the fact that he lumped together all the dates and incidents given by every known work, without critically sifting their evidence.

116. Tanjavarcha Shilalekh, a prodigiously long (2,652 lines in print) inscription in Marathi carved in December, 1803, on stone in the Vrihadishwar temple of Tanjore. Printed by Rajwade in the Prabhat and included in his Sadhanen, Vol. IX [1906]; another edited by T. Sambamurti Row in Tanjore (1907), **utterly worthless modern concoction** of the history of Shahji and Shivaji, evidently far exalting the junior Bhonsle branch, (the House of Tanjore).

117. 91 Qalimi Bakhar, also called 96 Qalimi Bakhar, containing that number of paragraphs [mostly very short.]

The manuscript from which Rajwade printed his text [in Vol. IX of his *Sadhanen*] is described in the Colophon as in the hand-writing of Khando Anaji Malkare, the son of Anaji Ranganath Malkare, who was appointed accountant [*majmua-dar*] of the army of Hambir Rao by Shivaji. An incorrect text [with many variants] is printed in Parasnis's *Bharat-varsha*. It is the same work as the "*Raigarh Life of Shivaji*." [English translation in *Forrest's selections from the letters, etc., in the Bombay Secretariat, Maratha Series, Vol. i, pages 1-22. [1885].* The expanded Persian translation is known as the *Tarikh-i-Shivaji*. [For its nature and value, see the \*introductory discussion to this Bibliography.]

It would appear that of all the Marhatha sources one can rely with some certainty only upon Sabhasad Bakhar, Jedhe Chronology and 91 Qalmi Bakhar. The rest being forgeries or for other failings are to be rejected as unhistorical. Even these are not always reliable. It is impossible to construct the history of Sevaji on the data supplied by them only. One must necessarily fall back upon Persian and European sources. The material contained in the Marhatha sources is not only meagre but from the historical point of view it is also bad. Let us begin with Sabhasad. He compiled his works about 14 years after the death

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\* For our purposes it is not necessary to give the "introductory discussion" here : The reader may see the same in Sarkar's *Shivaji*, 3rd Ed., pages. 408-9.

of Sevaji in exceptionally stringent circumstances, and, as Prof. Jadunath Sarkar notes in the bibliography reproduced above, it "is only a small book of barely 100 pages, composed from memory without the help of written memoranda or documents. The events are not arranged in the order of time. Some of the statements are incorrect. Weak in topography. No dates. Language very condensed and sometimes obscure." Such is the worth of the source which according to the same eminent authority is the "Most valuable Marathi account of Shivaji and our main source of information from the Maratha side." "Later biographies in the same language," goes on Prof. Jadunath Sarkar to show the worth of most other Marhathi sources, "have mostly copied this Sabhasad Bakhar and padded out their source by means of Sanskrit quotations, miracles, rhetorical flourishes, emotional gush and common-place remarks, and details added from the probabilities of the case or from pure imagination." The above criticism not only correctly estimates the value of Sabhasad's evidence but also shows the utter worthlessness of most other Marhathi documents. Next to Sabhasad come Jedhe Chronology and 91 Qalmi Bakhar. The former is a bare record of events with dates. It was



prepared from an essentially family point of view. Though many important political events and their dates are also given, the main purpose of the writers was to record those facts only which tended to affect the Jedhe family directly and immediately by raising or lowering the family fortune or prestige. The writers were not generally inquisitive, and, therefore it is not always safe to rely upon them, and as Prof. Jadunath Sarkar notes, some of the dates are demonstrably wrong. This is about the evidentiary value. In regard to Sevaji's character and achievements and his place in history, it fails to give us any idea for the simple fact that these were beyond the jurisdiction of the Jedhe clerks. However, its testimony about the murder of Afzal Khan is worthy of our consideration.

Now there remains only 91 Qalmi Bakhar. It would appear from Prof. Jadunath Sarkar's bibliography that it is the same work as the Raigarh Life of Shivaji, and that the India Office manuscript which is known as the Tarikh-i-Shivaji is only its expanded Persian translation. The same learned historian wrote about the latter in the "Modern Review" of 1907, pages 199 & 200, that it is "a nameless work by an unknown author giving the history of the rise and progress of the

Maratha State up to the death of Shivaji (1680 A. D.) It is evidently the work of a Hindu based on Maratha traditions. Legends abound. No critical spirit or sense of proportion is shown in the narrative. Inaccurate statements about Delhi affairs betray the ignorance of Moghal History. The style is plain even to baldness, with violations of Persian idioms and even grammar. The book ends with the accession of Shambhuji, which is followed by a detailed table of the various kinds, of property and forts left by Shivaji." Thus it is clear that like Sabhasad and the Jedhe Chronology the real value of 91 Qalmi Bakhar or Tarikh-i-Shivaji is essentially very small, and that it cannot rank with Persian and reliable European sources.

The essential merit of Sabhasad, Jedhe Shaka-vali and 91 Qalmi Bakhar lies in their being genuine works. Though they are not always capable of giving credible information, yet, unlike Shivadigvijay, etc., they are not palpable forgeries. The second point to be noted in this connection is that in spite of the fact that certain historians claim to have bestowed intensive study on Marhatha History, especially Sevaji, no one has attempted to compare these three with the Persian and European sources, and thus to appreciate

their true significance, although taken together they complete the set of Marhathi documents at once genuine and to a certain extent reliable. A careful sifting of the historical material contained in them would show that their testimony about Sevaji's character and deeds is exactly the same as that of the writers in Persian and European languages. The latter unanimously denounce his treachery. Sabhasad as well as the writer of the 91 Qalmi Bakhar unblushingly describe the perfidious means by which he made his detestable acquisitions. The Muhammadan and European writers accuse him of perpetrating cold-blooded assassinations. Sabhasad's account of the conquest of Javli, and, in a like manner Tarikh-i-Shivaji's description of the massacre of the Ghorpades\* create the same impression. In the accounts of Muhammadans and Europeans he appears as a thief, a robber, a plunderer and a devastator. The Marhatha sources also speak of the robberies, plunderings, and devastations that he carried on in the "Mughlai" and the "Adilshahi" districts. Though this is done not only shamelessly but often also jubilantly, the fact of his having conducted himself as a thief, robber, plunderer, and devastator is none-the-less there. The former

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\*Modern Review, 1907, V. 2, page 282.

habitually speak of him with contempt and hatred ; the latter, with a marked love for his personality and admiration for his deeds, exhibit a clear attitude of inconsiderateness towards him. They could love his person and admire his deeds, one is constrained to think, because the Marhatha standard of morality in those times was so low ; and they showed disrespect towards him because, the conclusion is irresistible, there was nothing in his conduct which entitles one to the respect of others. In Jedhe Shakavali one does not find the word "Raja" usually added to his name either as a prefix or as a suffix. Sabhasad has put more than once the word "haramjada\*" (bastard) for him in the mouth of others. In the Raigarh Bakhar he is said to have "Sallied forth† in a night darker than his own heart." In Tarikh-i-Shivaji he is called Yellow dog, brother of Jackal ‡ سگ زرد برادر شغال. Once more these genuine Marhatha sources agree with the Persian chroniclers and the European writers. It is in their being reticent on the issue of his championing the cause of Hinduism. Here

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\*Sen's Siva Chhatrapati, pages 14 and 8 .

†Forest's Selections from the letters, etc., in the Bombay Secretariat, Maratha Series, Vol I, page 18.

‡See the Modern Review, 1907, Vol. I, page 360.

also statements containing hints and suggestions to this effect are conspicuous by their absence. Nor do they differ in regard to the nature of his responsibility in murdering Afzal Khan, if we brush aside the interpolations, to be pointed out in the 4th Chapter, that have been introduced in Sabhasad Bakhar by some enthusiastic but dull-headed admirer of Sevaji. In short there is no material difference between the evidence about Sevaji's character and deeds of the Muhammadan and European historian on the one hand and that of the genuine old Marhatha writers on the other. Had this simple fact been realized by the authors of Shivadigvijay, etc., much ink and water would have been saved. Many people have 'discovered' and may still be busy in 'discovering' 'old *Bakhars*' and statepapers' in support of their fantastical assertions about Sevaji's supposed achievements and imaginary services to Hinduism. These poor people seem to be labouring under a deplorable delusion. They do not understand this simple fact that however great may the value of a newly discovered *Bakhar* or state-paper be, it cannot necessarily divest the older documents of their intrinsic worth.

A striking feature of Prof. Sarkar's bibliography is the large number of those Marhatha sources which have been characterised useless. Still more striking is the fact that most of them have been labelled as "worthless modern fabrication". *Shivadigvijay*, *Shivapratap*, *Chitni's Bakhar*, *Shrimant-Maharaj-Bhonsle-Yanchi-Bakhar*, *More-Yanchi-Choti Bakhar*, *Mahabaleshwarchi-Juni Mahiti*, *Ajna patra of Ram Chandra Amatya*, and *Tanjavarcha Shilalekh* come under this category. And yet it is on the basis of these that Kincaid and Parasnis, Takakhav and Keluskar, Savarkar, Sardesai, etc., have prepared their works. No wonder that in their books the character and deeds of Sevaji and his men and the moral, social, and political conditions of those times appear just the reverse of what they actually were. Here he seems to have been born and bred amongst a different people, working under a different set of circumstances, and labouring towards a goal he could not have seen with his eyes, physical as well as mental. The difference is not only formal but also material. It has already been shown that the evidence of the genuine Marhatha records is substantially the same as that of the Persian and European ones. According to these Sevajis was a cruel and barbarous robber;

while Shivadigvijay and others of its type paint him as a just and compassionate ruler. According to the former his conduct was mean and treacherous toward those who had the misfortune of reposing confidence in him ; but if we believe the latter, he behaved nobly and honourably even towards those who were his own enemies. According to the latter he resigned all personal ambitions and dedicated his life to the cause of his religion and people. But the former, besides being generally silent on this point, whenever say anything relevant, their views lead us to the opposite direction. In their accounts he appears as a selfish and unscrupulous person, always actuated by motives of self aggrandizement and personal ambition for the realization of which he could stoop down to the lowest depth of moral wickedness, doing even those acts which were not only expressly forbidden by his religion and which would naturally wound the susceptibilities of his fellow Hindus, but, which, in the eyes of others, would imply the negation of Hinduism itself. If we read together the versions of the two sets of writers, the genuine contemporary recorders whether Muslim, European, or Marhatha and the shameless modern fabricators, we will find the contrast not only striking, but stupendously



shocking to our moral conscience and historical good sense. According to the former, he was an ungrateful, dishonest, unscrupulous, treacherous, revengeful, cruel, and barbarous robber, who could violate the dictates of his religion, and who was unmindful of the sufferings of his people; the latter present him as an obliging, faithful, just, honourable, benign and merciful ruler, who devoted his very life to the cause of his *desh* and *dharma*. That is, the one would have him painted as nothing less than a deity of virtue; the other, as an incarnation of evil.

It will be interesting to note some of the chief characteristics of these forged accounts. In the first place, their authorship is imputed to such persons as were actually Sevaji's contemporaries and were closely associated with him personally or through their immediate relations. For instance, the authorship of Shivadigvijay is ascribed to Khando Ballal, the son of Balaji Avji, the so-called secretary of Sevaji. But we are surprised when we consider the language, style, ideas, and sentiments of the author. Dr. S. N. Sen observes about it that its language at times is "very modern". It is full of Sanskrit quotations. Its author was much more learned

than Sabhasad. His ideas and sentiments are such as could not have been of a contemporary of Sevaji, but being foreign to the Indian nature have been only imported into this country with the British rule.

Secondly, these forged accounts are full of palpable historical errors. In order to illustrate below we quote a few lines from an article of Prof. Jadunath Sarkar, published in the *Modern Review* of May, 1924 :—

In a Sanad dated 1529 A. D., p. 8 of *Sanads and Letters* edited by Mawji and Parasnis, Bijapur is designated as Darul-zafar. We know that this title was given to the city by Aurangzeb on its capture in 1686, i.e., nearly 160 years afterwards (see the Official history of Aurangzeb's reign, *Maasir-i-Alamgiri*, Persian Text p. 282. The forger who did not know this fact but found Bijapur designated by that epithet in documents written after 1684, transferred it to his fabrication with the pretended date of 1529."

We shall give one more instance of forgery. In the opinion of some Sevaji owed his success to his own genius of initiative and enterprise and fervent love of religion ; others hold him a product of those social and religious forces which had been at work since long before his appearance. The daring imagination of Mr. Govind Sakharam Sardesai carried him further. In his *Main currents of Maratha History*, (p. 6)

he draws the connection up to the Rayas of Vijayanagar and the Yadavas of Deogiri and declares that the two "traditions of Deogiri and Vijayanagar blended in Shivaji." In regard to the latter kingdom he speaks of an "old paper", recording a "dialogue between Rama Raya, the victim of Talikota, and his mother, when, on the eve of the famous battle (January 1565) he went to ask her blessings for his success." "Says Rama Raya" goes on Mr. Sardesai "this our country has been a favourite resort of our gods, Brahmins, religion, and charities. Five Muhammadan kings have combined and conspired to destroy it. In order to prevent such a catastrophe, let me, mother, go with all my forces and conquer them. Do you confer your blessings upon me." "This conversation" adds Mr. Sardesai "describes the attitude of the Hindu mind and shows how the spirit of religion had inspired it to rise against Muhammadan oppression in the south long before Shivaji, who simply took up the cue later with the same object, as the *Bakhars* and other records go to prove".

It is not known who "discovered" this "old paper" which bears such a deep impress of fabrication. It is perhaps no other document than the *Talikota Bakhar*, mentioned by Mr. Sardesai

on p. 12 of the same treatise. Be it whatsoever, it is a transparently forged document. Five Muhammadan kings never went to war against Rama Raya. The king of Berar did not join the allies. They were only four. But as the text books prescribed for the Anglo Indian Schools and Colleges erroneously, though generally, describe it as a war of five Muhammadan kings the poor forger repeated the same mistake. Secondly, Rama Raya, in the battle of Talikot, was not less than 90 years old.\* His mother must have died long before ; and if not, imagine a *gallant of ninety* addressing these spirited words to *his* mother.

The most astounding feature of these *Bakhars* is the hostility of their writers, as distinguished from the general indifference of the genuine old recorders of their own race, towards muslims. The latter are called *mlechchas* and *yavanas* and are portrayed as perpetually oppressing the Hindus and doing every thing in their power to harass and insult them. Their attitude towards Sevaji is represented as specially inimical. Hindus are shown as groaning under the Muhammadan mis-rule and

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\* See Ishwari Prashad's History of Medieval India, 2nd ed. p. 394.

tyranny. They seem to be very anxious to get rid of them and be ruled by a fellow Hindu in their stead, if possible, by Sevaji himself. The words put into the mouth of different persons are very unhappy and calculated to create communal bitterness. Frequently, but uselessly and superfluously, references are made to the sufferings of Brahmins and destruction of temples at the hands of the Muslims. What is still more undesirable is frequent allusion to cowslaughter. As for Sevaji, paeans of mischief-creating praise are constantly poured on him. He is represented as one who was possessed of an inborn and natural hatred for the muslims, and given since his very childhood, to exciting the same in the breast of his co-religionists against them, their kings, and their Governments. For instance, the author of Shivadigvijay while describing the incidents of his childhood makes him exhort the Hindus not to "live upon the bread of Muhammadans and witness cow-slaughter. Death is far more desirable. I shall no longer tolerate any slight upon religion or any act of Muhammeden injustice".\* Again "we are Hindus and the rightful lords of the realm, it is not proper for us to witness cow-slaughter and

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\*Sen's Siva Chhatrapati, p. 157.

oppression of the Brahmins".\* Once more he is made to say :—

" We are Hindus and they **yavanas** 'Muhammadans'. They are very low—in fact there is none lower,—I feel a loathing to salute them. They commit evil deeds like cow-slaughter. It is wrong to witness any slight on religion and the Brahmins. Cows are slaughtered as we pass by the roads. It pains me and I feel inclined to cut off the head of the offenders. In my mind I feel disposed to decapitate the oppressor of the cows. But I am helpless as I do not know what my father will think of it. But I think it wrong to associate ourselves with the Muhammadans and to visit the houses of the Amirs and the Wazirs. If perchance we touch them we should change our clothes." (Sen's Siva Chhatrapati p. 159-160).

Incidents showing Sevaji's spirit of defiance of Muhammadan kings are coined and related. It is said of a visit paid by him in the Company of Shahji to the King of Bijapur: "When he went to the palace with the Raja, his father, the latter made his obeisance by touching the earth with his hand. He (Sevaji) should have paid his respects in a similar manner, but he sat in the court without doing so."† Such feelings and sentiments are imputed not only to Sevaji but also to other Hindus of that age. It is said of the poet Bhushan.

"While Bhukhan the poet was living with his brother Chintaman Kavi, who was a court poet of the Emperor of

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\*Sen's Siva Chhatrapati, p. 160.

†Sen's Siva Chhatrapati. p. 157.

Delhi, some of the domestics remarked that Bhukhan spent his time at home doing nothing. The poet there upon said that he would not live upon the bread of the **yavanas** and left for home. The poet then went to the Deccan. As the fame of Sivaji Maharaj had reached him Bhukhan went to his court and saw the Raja. "If there is any enemy of the Yavanas I shall stay with him" said the poet. The Maharaja replied that he was the death of the Muhammadans.\*

Such sentiments are attributed not only to individuals but are extended as well to entire populations then under the Mohammadan rule. The Hindus of Savanoor are made to address him in the following words:—

"We are groaning under the tyrannical sway of the aliens and our Dharma is trampled under foot. Come, oh! Champion of the Hindu faith, come, oh! destroyer of the wicked and unbelieving aliens rule. Here we are at the mercy of the Muhammadan general, Yusuf, and his army, who because we sympathise with thee and conspired to invite our Hindu compatriots under thee have made us prisoners under our own house, placed guards at our gates, and are trying to starve us out by interdicting food and water. So turn they nights into days and come Oh! deliverer of the Hindu race.\*

The fourth feature of these Bakhars is want of historical perspective. They suggest complete infallibility on the part of Sevaji. Being wholly blind to his faults they dwell upon his supposed virtues only. In the narratives of all

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\*Sen's Siva Chhatrapati, p. 160.

†See V. D. Savarkar's Maratha Pad-Padshahi, p. 7.



genuine old writers, including Sabhasad and the writer of *Tarikh-i-Shivaji*, the two most salient features of his character seem to be treachery and cruelty. But it is impossible to find even the trace of these qualities in the *Sevaji* of *Shivadigvijay* etc. For instance in Sabhasad's account the Javli affair is described as a cold blooded treacherous murder. But according to the Mahabaleshwar account "*Shivaji repeatedly strove to win More to his side, that More so often tried treacherously to take Shivaji prisoner and that he eventually fell in a quarrel between him and Ragho Ballal Atre while the latter was delivering him an ultimatum*". "*Shivaji*" concludes Mr. Kincaid on the basis of the said account "*was clearly innocent of More's death*"\*

Marhatha historians seem to think that they possess a great wealth of historical material on *Sevaji*. It is generally believed that such material has been accumulating for a long time. every historian alludes to the 'selfless' and 'patriotic' labours of an indefatigable band of workers', said to have been "discovering" "unearthing", and "bringing forward" a mass of

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\*A History of the Maratha People by Kincaid and Parasnis, page 272.

old documents which await publication, and which are always supposed to throw new light on many important matters. This was the excuse of the late Mr. Justice Ranade as back as 1872. Mr. Savarkar offered the same plea in 1925, and, we are sure that a writer of tomorrow will justify his labours on the same score. There must be a limit to every thing. How long will these gentlemen continue to "discover" and "unearth" documents of the sort they do. They are worse than useless. Prof. Jadunath Sarkar is right in characterising them sources of danger.

It is worth our while to consider how the historical societies of Maharashtra have come to possess such a gigantic mass of *Bakhars*, state-papers etc. A considerable part of it is undoubtedly genuine. But it is true in the case of such papers only as purport to be title-deeds, etc., which have little or no bearing on the subject in hand. Prof. Jadunath Sarkar has offered a very satisfactory explanation. Says he :—

"The extinction of the Peshwa's rule in 1817 and even earlier his virtual deposition from sovereignty in 1803 naturally led to a revolution in the mental attitude of the Marathas..... It became a social and political disadvantage for a noble family in Maharashtra to describe its founder as a creation of the Peshwa period, rather than as a follower of Shivaji. Then began a mad struggle among them to write

their family history and represent their first family ancestor as patriotic supporters of that king in weal and woe..... while some of those claims are true, all cannot be so..... the evil was further aggravated by the formation of Inam Commission (1824) which called upon every holder of the land or state pension to prove his rights by producing old documents and giving his family history. The result was a vast crop of reports submitted to the English government and designated variously as 'Kafiyat', 'Yadi', 'Hakikat', and 'Karina'. Their only foundation was family tradition dim with the distance of time, or the daring imagination of the hereditary family priest and astrologer\*\*

About the same set of documents he observes in the next para :—

"Of this class thousands of documents in the Marathi language have been printed. But their value is exceedingly small. 98 per cent of these papers is of no significance at all as they relate to the petty local rights of petty private individuals. It is not possible to give detailed examples in this book"

Another powerful factor is the new interpretation itself. Since Sevaji's being invested with the insignia of championship many "old Bakhars" have been "discovered" and "state papers" "unearthed". Shivadigvijay and its prototypes are comparatively recent publications. In the beginning they merely served to make Hindus hostile to muslims. But later on when this hostility had become deep rooted and the

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\*Sarkar's Shivaji 3rd Edition page 411.

mind of an ordinary Hindu of those parts, become ready to believe anything that was said in that direction and consequently the prospects of sale of such works increased, the hope of monetary gain also must have strengthened the stimulus. The more a forger could exaggerate Sevaji's supposed services and sacrifices for Hinduism, stressing hard upon his equally unreal hatred for the muslims, the greater would be the chances of the popularity of his work.

When once Sevaji's championship was established,—as if incontrovertibly,—it only remained to see who had inspired him with the sacred ideal and what were the contributory causes of his success. It seems every body “discovered” new “old Bakhars” to support his own view and disprove that of others. According to some Sevaji owed his success to the influence of the saints of Maharashtra and the Pandharpur movement ; others, vehemently denying the very factum of the said movement and the efficaciousness of the influence of all the said saints except one, assert that he owed his success principally to the active co-operation and assistance of Ramdas Swami and his followers, whose no less than \*800 *maths* spreading throughout

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\*See Sardesai's Main Currents of Maratha History, page 66.

India they have discovered. A third body of historians believes that he achieved his goal due to the Bhagwat Dharma movement. Then, there is a fourth school who would not tolerate the glory of Sevaji's achievement being eclipsed in howsoever modest a degree. They denounce all the former schools and declare that he carried on his work unassisted and single-handed and achieved everything due to his own inborn genius of organisation and personal effort. The expositors of different views are usually in controversy\* with each other. Some times these simple fellows make very fierce attacks on each other as if that would enable them to throw dust into the eyes of the world in regard to the character and deeds of the real man. But the

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\*Prof. Jadunath Sarkar observes in the Modern Review of May 1924 page 569 :—

A certain class of writers frequently talk about the 'Maratha historical school' on the Maratha opinion on some points of Deccan History. People intimately acquainted with the Bombay Presidency know what these terms really mean. But others, who have not such experience require to be cautioned by being informed of the true state of things in Maharashtra. For a long time past, owing to territorial quarrels, there have been opposite schools in respect of Maratha history. Among the Maratha writes themselves, such as Puna versus Baroda and Kolhapur versus Satara. These political feuds

funniest of all things is the quarrel between the members of different castes, about the relative merits of the contributions which their ancestors made to Sevaji's task of religious and national emancipation

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transferred to literature have been cut crosswise and the situation further complicated by the caste-bickerings between the Prabhus and the Chitpavans, and the Marathas proper (an agricultural and military caste, just now rising to literary production) and the Brahmins (who would ascribe all Shivaji's achievements to Brahmin inspiration, guidance and administrative support.) Each of these "historical schools" has its own writers, discovers "old papers" favourable to its claims, interprets them to serve its pet theories, and worst of all has its own mss of well known historical works with its own special reading of the significant passages.

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"Coming to more recent times only six years ago at the 4th Annual Conference of the Indian Historical Research society of Puna, the leader of the Maratha historical school, Mr. V. K. Rajwade (a Brahmin) took the occasion of reading what he was pleased to call an interpretation of an old Sanskrit work written in Shivaji's time to deliver a long and slashing attack on the Prabhu caste, inspite of cries of "stop ! stop !!, sit down". The effect was instantaneous. The Prabhu members left this society as a den of the haughty intolerant Brahmins and started a rival den of their own called the Chandra Seniya Prabhu Historical Research Society of Puna [see Chaturtha Sammelan Bhritta and K. T. Gultas Rajwadyachi Gagabhatti.]

We may now expect that each of these castes will "discover" its own 'old papers' and readings of Mss which will prove diametrically opposed to those of the others. We

I cannot do better than to quote once more the words of Prof. Jadunath Sarkar :—

" Maratha history has been muddled also by the silly but very bitter quarrel between the Brahmins and the Prabhu caste, which began with growing wealth and public safety\* under Shivaji, burst into a flame in Shambhuji's reign (at the outcasting of Balaji Avji) and has been revived and widely extended in modern times by the help of a cheap printing-press, the multiplication of newspapers as sectional organs and the easy means of distributing writings. Each caste interprets the past history of the country and discovers old documents so as to heighten its own glory and depress its rival caste. A historical statement or argument is valued differently according as it comes from a Chitpawan or a Karbhari, a Brahmin or a Prabhu."†

For ascertaining the genuineness of a newly discovered historical document no hard and fast rules can be laid down. Various circumstances are to be taken into consideration. In the

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hear of the communal representation in legislatures and Government offices. It has been left to the 20th century Marathas to give us the communal cooking of the history.

" What is truth ?" asked Pilate. If he had been posted to Maharashtra it would have been necessary for him to ask about the historical witness's caste, sect [Ramdasi or not] and favourite historical coterie (mandal)."

\*As for the growing wealth and public safety in Sevaji's time, see the last chapter of this book.

† Sarkar's Shivaji, 3rd Ed., page 411.

first place, one has to look to its language, style, choice of words, and the temperament of the author. Secondly, due weight should be attached to the condition of the paper, ink, and format of the manuscript. Thirdly, the time of its publication should also be considered. A book which is known to have been in existence for long and which has already been treated as genuine should be generally regarded as such even now. But when a book purporting to have been written long ago is published only now, generally it will not be free from doubt and should be treated with caution. Now *Shivadigvijay*, etc., are asserted to have been written by those who lived in the time of Sevaji or immediately after his death. But they came to public notice for the first time more than two centuries after his demise. This is a suspicious circumstance. A fourth test is proper custody. A document brought out of a public office or library or even a private collection which is known to have been in existence for a pretty long time, and where it can be ascertained to have been placed or seen about the time it purports to have been written or long before its alleged discovery, may be presumed genuine. Here also the *bakhars* fail. A fifth way of



testing the genuineness of a newly discovered document is to compare the character of the impression it creates with that of the older ones. If they do not at all differ from each other or differ only in unimportant and minute details, it should not be as a rule rejected, though as a piece of evidence it should be assigned a place lower than the older ones. This does not mean that all those papers, which claim to be old but which have come to light recently and create an impression different from that of the older ones are necessarily fictitious. This is not the case, particularly when we have reason to believe that the author had no access to the primary sources of information and could have relied merely upon hearsay and bazaar gossip, or, being temperamentally unfit to make a sober record of facts, was naturally inclined to make distortions and misrepresentations. But when the version of a book asserted to have been written by a contemporary, who, we have reason to believe, knew the facts correctly and would not have written falsely, is not only different from but diametrically opposed to that of the sources of unimpeachable genuineness and authenticity, it should be at once rejected as fabricated. This is exactly the case here.

This can be understood better by means of an illustration. Suppose a gentleman of Maharashtra "discovers" a *bakhar* about Sevaji which purports to have been written by one of his ministers, say Moro Punt Pingie. Let it be further granted that the paper, ink, format, etc., also go to establish an ancient origin. If it lays down that Sevaji was the son of a Brahmin of Satara, whom, despite his laziness and indolence, his friends who carried on predatory wars against Bijapur and Delhi selected as their leader and ultimately crowned as king, will anybody believe it to be a genuine work? No! Why not? The reason is clear. It is known beyond doubt that Sevaji besides not being the son of any Brahmin was one of the most active and industrious persons who have played any part in the history of India. Moro Punt, being constantly associated with his chief, cannot be believed to have made such an absurd statement about him. Now Sevaji's general indifference in public life to the dictates of his religion and his utter disregard of the objects of Hindu veneration, whenever they happened to collide with his personal interest, being similarly established on the basis of the documents of incontrovertible genuineness and reliability, one finds the inference irresistible

that all those *bakhars*, etc., which seek to establish his championship of Hinduism are forgeries.

To be brief writers of different persuasions and nationalities have been consulted. But as the Marhatha historians have expressed doubts about the sincerity of Muhammadan writers, we have neither based our opinion upon their evidence nor made quotations from them. With the exception of (*Sabhasad bakhar*, *Jedhe chronology*) and (*91 Qalmi bakhari*) and its recensions, the genuineness of other Marhatha *bakhars* being not established they have been held inadmissible in evidence, and will find no place in this enquiry. In the peculiar circumstances of the case only foreign accounts can be deemed impartial and trustworthy. A Marhatha writer, Mr. N. S. Takakhava,\* has blamed the modern European historians for imitating the Muhammadan chroniclers and reproducing their language of calumny. We have carried on our investigation mainly through the contemporary European records. The coming pages will show that the former have been blamed in vain, and that the worst condemnation of Sevaji's deeds

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\*The Life of Shivaji Maharaj by N. S. Takakhav and K. A. Keluskar, page 566.

and character, instead of emanating from their pens, has come down from the European writers, particularly the English factors.

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## CHAPTER III

## WAS SEVAJI A CHAMPION OF HINDUISM ?

Was Sevaji fighting against Aurangzeb and Bijapur in the interest of Hinduism ? Were his efforts inspired by the love of religion and motherland ? Did he undertake his wars with the definite purpose of emancipating his co-religionists from the yoke of Muhammadan dependence ? Was there any noble and inspiring ideal which animated his campaigns of plunder and freebooting ? Was he possessed with the idea of overthrowing the Muslim governments and establishing a Hindu Raj in its stead in the whole of India or at least in Maharashtra ? Did he himself feel that he was fighting for the sake of his *desh* and *dharma* ? Did he ever conceive the idea of restoring the Hindu culture and Hindu civilization ? If so, what were the measures that he took for the realization of his object ? Did he attempt to create in the hearts of his countrymen the love of national independence and sow the seeds of hatred against the Muslim governments and their system ? Was he ever regarded by his contemporaries as the deliverer of the Hindu race and the liberator of his country and community ? Was he ever

accorded the same respect which must inevitably be shown to every true national leader? Is there anything in his deeds to justify such inference being made? Lastly, is there anything in his career which suggests his having conducted himself as the saviour of Brahmins, the protector of cows, and the defender of temples? In short, does he deserve to be invested with the insignia of championship of Hinduism which the historians of to-day are so loudly claiming for him? This is the proposition to which I have addressed myself in this chapter.

Let it be stated at the very outset that the responsibility of a researcher, whether he prefers to stick to the more or less traditional opinion which assigns such an exalted position to Sevaji, or be inclined to take the contrary view, is by no means inconsiderable. It is true of the former case because so much has already been said, so much mischief has already resulted therefrom, and so much more is bound to crop up in proportion to its repetition, that the work of a historian—unless the righteousness of his attempt is guaranteed by truth itself—assumes a most unholy and impious character; in the latter case, for the simple fact, if not for any other reason, that he shall have to challenge along with the views

of others the opinion of a historian of no less repute and standing than Sir Jadunath Sarkar. But, as has been said, no authority, however great, is more reliable than its own sources. The present writer has the misfortune to differ from Prof. Sarkar on this point. But it will be noted that he has based his conclusion on those very documents the genuineness of which that great historian has himself found unimpeachable and to the great value of which he has himself testified. As for the Marhatha school, we are separated as poles asunder from each other due to my denying, as Prof. Sarkar has also done, the very genuineness of most of those indigenous chronicles on the sandy foundations of which these writers have based their historical edifice. Therefore, my thesis is being submitted for the consideration specially of those who are of Prof. Sarkar's mode of thinking.

Before taking up the subject itself let us think upon certain criteria by which it may be easy for us to arrive at a clear and definite conclusion and which may at the same time warrant a surer and firmer basis for our research. Now it is said that Sevaji devoted his life to the service of Hinduism. The best way of testing the truth of the assertion is to examine the attitude of Sevaji

himself towards his Hindu brethren and to see whether it is possible to discriminate in his favour, between his own measures and the activities of other rulers, who without any pretension of having been inspired with any such noble and high ideals as are imputed to him, thought of their personal interest alone. The attitude of the Hindu population, whose cause he is said to have espoused with so much vigour and selflessness, is a relevant fact and should serve as our second criterion. Thirdly, as it is said that Sevaji stood to defend Hinduism against the Muslim powers, it should be properly considered how Aurangzeb and other Muslim rulers themselves interpreted his rising? The fourth pertinent fact the determination of which must go a long way towards proving or disproving the claim of Sevaji's admirers is his conduct toward his contemporary Muslim rulers. The importance of this factor cannot be exaggerated. Fifthly, ordinary Muslims being also a party likely to be affected by his rise, the ascertainment of their attitude as a class towards him and his towards them must necessarily have some bearing on matters in issue. Sixthly, a judicious analysis of the notions of such contemporaries of Sevaji as wrote under those very circumstances which were



the creation of his alleged crusade against the Muslim monarchies must necessarily yield very cogent results. They could not possibly have mistaken the true meaning of his wars and plundering. Seventhly, seeing that plundering raids and robberies played such a conspicuous part in Sevaji's life, it should be asked whether it is possible to reconcile them with the notions of nobility, righteousness, and self-sacrifice, which must inevitably follow all such grand ambitions and aspirations as are ascribed to him. While doing so the nature of the respect paid to his name by his contemporaries may also be simultaneously considered. After having prepared the ground thus, the evidentiary value of those events and circumstances, which the admirers of Sevaji so proudly speak of, may be discussed and criticized to ascertain their relevancy. Lastly, it should be seen whether there are any such circumstances as have been sketched in or as may reasonably be inferred from the contemporary records that may necessarily destroy the presumption, if there were any, of Sevaji's championing the cause of Hinduism, leaving no ground for anyone to claim anything so meritorious for him.

Nothing is more conspicuous in Sevaji's career than robbery and plunder. These topics

should occupy the greater part of his biography. In the course of these he dealt with Hindus as well as Muhammadans. But the western part of the Deccan was then, as it is now, overwhelmingly populated with the former. In the absence of strong and positive proof to the contrary, the natural inference should be that as the result of his freebooting campaigns and their attendant circumstances, which necessarily involved pain, torture, and the death of individuals, and the spoliation and ruin of villages and towns, the members of the Hindu community suffered much more than Muhammadans. Rich as are our sources of information about Sevaji, we have come across nothing which shows that he ever sought to discriminate between his Hindu and Muhammadan victims in conducting those terrible raids and in inflicting those inhuman barbarities of which the contemporary records are so full. Neither has any historian had the audacity to deny this fact, nor (as far as the information of the present writer extends), have any of the many research societies of Maharashtra "discovered" a *bakhar* or state paper to this effect. It is incredible that those very Hindus for whose sake alone he was fighting against the Muslim kings of the country should suffer such miseries

at his hands. Similarly, a critical examination of his policy towards the Hindu chieftains of Maharashtra, the Koli country, Kanara, etc., would show that in his dealings with his Hindu neighbours he conducted himself as ruthlessly and as unscrupulously as with the Muhammadan kings and nobles. Vikram Shah, Som Shah and Dhara Rai, the rulers of the Koli country, whom he dislodged and turned homeless, were Hindus and not Muhammadans ; Surya Rao of Shrirangarpur, Lakham and other Desais of Savant-Vadi, and Baji and other Ghorpares of Mudhol whom he respectively dislocated, reduced to extreme poverty and misery, and most inhumanly massacred, were his own kith and kin ; and the commanders of Purandhar, Mohite of Supa, and Chandra Rao More of Javli, whom he respectively duped, deceived, and treacherously murdered, belonged to the same *desh* and *dharma*\*. Last of all, in none of those documents, the genuineness of which has been admitted by Prof. Jadunath Sarkar (we are not speaking of the Marhatha school who might have discovered anything in the past or may discover anything in the future) there is nothing which suggests that any appeal was

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\*See Sarkar's Shivaji, 3rd Ed., pages 191, 192, 194, 86, 236, 235, 40, 46 and 42.

issued by Sevaji to the Hindus in the name of their religion. Had any such argument been addressed to them, or had Hindus themselves believed Sevaji to be what he is now represented to have been, the great empire of the Mughals, which rested in the days of Aurangzeb, as it had previously done, on the loyalty and support of the majority community, would have collapsed in a day like a house of cards.

When we turn from the policy of Sevaji to the attitude of Hindus themselves we get once more convincing evidence from the contemporary records to prove that he was hated and distrusted by Hindus no less than by Muslims. We shall take up the testimony of English factors. They used to come into contact with all sections of the people of this country, to whose mental conditions as these changed from time to time, their letters frequently offer very nice clues. They inform the company after recording Sevaji's flight from Agra: "Now *all* wait some cruel revenge upon the country and people."\* It will be noted that Muslims are not singled out for the prospective revenge. In the same way the factors of Bombay described Sevaji to one Thomas

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\* E. F. R., Vol I., page 116.

Roach, when the latter was at Agra, as "a plundering thief, and an enemy of *all* people, robbing and plundering all merchants and places of trade."\* Similarly the factors of Karwar<sup>o</sup> in a letter addressed to Surat after the occupation of the former by Sevaji describing the havoc caused by the Marhathas observed :—

"... next year the men will be ready to eat one another for the new crop will be very small, *all* pray that Moors may come and regain the country, and there is a rumour that they will come after the rains."†

We are told here very clearly that *all*, and not only the Muslims, prayed for the return of the "Moors", who thus seem to have been preferred to Sevaji and his Marhathas even by the Hindus. No better proof of his unpopularity and of widespread resentment against him can possibly be given.

The only conclusion at which one can arrive after making a perusal of the contemporary records is that the Hindu community as a religious body remained supremely indifferent to the rise of Sevaji and that none of its members ever thought that his religion would derive any support from the Marhatha chief. He was

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\* E. F. R., Vol. I, page 308.

† E. F. R., Vol II, page 59.

undoubtedly loved by his soldiers. But that was due to his qualities of leadership and organizing capacity and should not be confounded with the popularity of a national hero. With the exception of those who were enlisted in his army or who accompanied his train as camp-followers, all, whether Hindu or Muhammadan, dreaded him more than plague and pestilence. The very rumour of his approach used to make people vacate their houses and run away in all directions for safety. The contemporary records are full of such instances. Apart from the immediate neighbours who used to suffer from the direful effects of his rise every now and then, there is nothing to prove positively that Hindus of distant parts had any better notions about him. Even those of his contemporary co-religionists who were neither his partisans nor his opponents, but for some reason or other used to come into contact with him every now and then, must have failed to see the significance of Sevaji's rise, if we accept the contention of Prof. Jadunath Sarkar. Narayan Shenvi, a Hindu agent of the English factors at Bombay, wrote to the Deputy Governor of that port from Raigarh on the eve of Sevaji's coronation :—

"...It is not known whether he will be crowned in person or some other prince, for it is reported that he hath a prince of Nizamshahy race in his custody\*".

Obviously, in the mind of the writer of these lines there was no difference of kind between the aims and ideals of Sevaji and his father, who throughout his life prided himself on being an humble servant of the Muhammadan sultanates of the Deccan. The writer was a Hindu, and due to his occupation used to come into contact with the Marhathas frequently. And yet he remained ignorant that Sevaji had been toiling hard for such a long time to establish a Hindu kingdom.

We learn about certain Brahmin families of Goa that they, being unable to bear hardships at the hands of Portuguese clergymen, at last abandoned that place and settled down at Bombay.† Why did they not think of moving to the adjacent territory of Sevaji who had been labouring so hard to emancipate their religion from foreign bondage, and prefer another European nation who were after all foreigners and belonged to more or less the same persuasion as the Portuguese themselves followed. Manucci informs us of the

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\* E. F. R., Vol. I., page 328. See also F. B. S., page 428.

† E. F. R., Vol. II., page 110.



Hindus of Chaul waiting in deputation on Jai Singh during the latter's short sojourn at Poona and of their complaining that the "Portuguese were seizing the sons of the Hindus and making them Christians."\* Such a deputation ought to have waited on a champion of Hinduism like Sevaji, who was their close and permanent neighbour, and not on the Hindu servant of a bigoted Muslim king like Aurangzeb. Similarly the Hindu merchants of Surat, resenting the decrees of the Qazi of that place intended to migrate to Bombay† and submitted petitions to Aurangzeb himself, but, curiously enough, did not conceive the idea of invoking the aid of Sevaji or of shifting to his dominions so close to them. Neither did this idea occur to the merchants themselves nor were suggestions to this effect made to them by their English friends whom they approached. Seeing how conspicuous Sevaji had already become, the attitudes of the Hindus of Goa, Chaul, and Surat remain inexplicable unless it is conceded that the Hindu population of his time never took him to be what he is nowadays represented to have been.

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\* *Storia do Mogor*, 2nd Vol. page 142.

† *E. F. R.*, Vol. I, page 136—140.



The following anecdote which is often narrated with approbation gives us an idea of how Sevaji's Hindu contemporaries interpreted his deeds. When he fled from Agra he as well as his companions travelled in the garb of sanniyasis. The story runs thus : " the pretended sanniyasis one evening took refuge in the house of a peasant in a village on the Godavari. The old mother of the host apologized to the holy men for the poor fare placed before them, saying that the troopers of the brigand Shivaji had recently robbed the village. She cursed them and their master to her heart's content. Shivaji noted the names of the peasants and the village carefully and on his return home summoned the family of his host and gave them more than what they had lost in the raid."\*

It was very kind of Sevaji that he gave them 'more than what they had lost in the raid.' But this one instance of compensation should not make us blind to the innumerable cases of robbery and plunder, wherein the losses of the sufferers could not possibly have been compensated. It is only in the cursing of the old woman that we get the moral of the story. When she cursed Sevaji and his followers 'to her heart's content' she

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\* See Sarkar's Shivaji, 3rd Ed. page 155.

only give expression to the feelings of the thousands of persons, Hindus as well as Muslims, who like her were robbed. It is also to be noted that it must have been a Hindu family with whom Sevaji had gone to stay ; and the old woman a follower of the same religion in the interest of which he is said to have been fighting against the Muslim kings. That the story should have been narrated as an instance of Sevaji's munificence shows us not only the lengths to which his admirers can go in their own way, but also that novel standard of judgment which their mental perversion has set up.

Aurangzeb himself though considerably alarmed at the dimensions and effectiveness which the rising of Sevaji eventually assumed, never attached any religious importance to the matter. That Emperor is very often blamed for his suspicious nature. But we find him sending Hindu generals against Sevaji and stationing Hindu regiments under Hindu Qiladars in the Marhatha territory. And his trust was never betrayed. No Hindu, whether general or soldier, who was sent against Sevaji, fought with less intrepidity than his Muslim brother. The ardour, tact, and patience exhibited by Jai Singh during his campaign against Sevaji were worthy of

Aurangzeb himself. Who can exaggerate the integrity of Manohar Das Gaur and the dauntlessness of Amar Singh Chandavat who laid down his life in the service of the Mughal Emperor? From the side of Sevaji, Tanaji Malusare inspires the young Marhathas of this generation with daring and courage. Did the Rajput Qiladar Udaibhan fight with less bravery and gallantry on Aurangzeb's behalf?

Similarly the kings and nobles of Bijapur never took Sevaji to be more than an ordinary rebel. Though that rebel in the course of time became a serious menace to the existence of their kingdom, there is nothing to show that the Bijapuris ever apprehended that the forces of Hinduism as such were arrayed against them. We find them trusting against Sevaji Hindu generals, and the latter in their turn never forfeiting the confidence reposed in them. The king of Golkonda went one step further. He welcomed the Marhatha chief and his army in his own capital, financed him with a princely donation, and commissioned him to conquer the Bijapuri Karnatic on his behalf.

Still more notable is the attitude of the Marhathas themselves towards the Muslim princes.

In examining Sevaji's conduct towards them generally too much importance is attached to his wars and plundering. The instinct of self-aggrandisement always determines the conduct of the man of the world. But it does not mean that all other feelings are absent in him. Sevaji and his Marhathas, far from displaying any spirit of hatred and revenge, which the historians of this generation would generally like us to believe, exhibited a remarkable reverence and consideration for the Muhammadan princes. We are simply amazed to-day at the herculean efforts of Shahji to revive the glories of the house of Nizam Shah. The fallen house of Ahmadnagar seems to have continued to command the love and fidelity of the Marhathas long after its final dismemberment, even in the days of Sevaji. A certain demand of the English factors was characterised by Sevaji's officers as 'being positively against the laws and constitutions of their country now and formerly of the Nizam Shahi kingdom by which they are still governed.\*' It has already been shown how Narayan Shenvi, the Hindu agent of the English factors at the eve of Sevaji's coronation, was in doubt as to whether 'he will be crowned in person or some other prince, for it is

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\*E. F. R., Vol. I, page 365.

reported that he hath a prince of Nizam Shahi race in his custody.\* The testimony of the Hindu writer of *Tarikh-i-Shivaji* is connotative of the Marhathas identifying themselves with the house of Nizam Shah and of their claiming possession of the Deccan only on behalf of the Ahmadnagar princes. They are said to have written to Aurangzeb that "the Deccan was originally under the Nizam Shah whose descendants are now in power. Your Majesty has no right to this province."†

The attitude of Sevaji towards the Bijapuris is no less significant. He plundered the dominion of his liege Lord, captured its forts, and annexed its provinces, but he does not seem to have been devoid of the last sap of affection for his sovereign. He helped Adil Shah at a most critical juncture and prolonged the existence of Bijapur by seven years, i.e., beyond his own lifetime. When approached by Siddi Masud, the Bijapuri regent, in 1679, he undertook the defence of that kingdom against the Moghal invaders. The Siddi had approached him saying:

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"You are a hereditary servant, elevated by this court.

\* F. B. S., page 428.

† 'Modern Review,' 1907, Pt 2, P. 280

And therefore you will feel for this house more than others can. We cannot defend the kingdom and its forts without your aid. Be true to your salt ; turn towards us. Command what you consider proper and it shall be done by us.”\*

Sevaji's conduct towards the king of Golkonda was only consistent with his behaviour toward other Muslim powers. It was one of consideration and reverence for the Qutb Shah and humility as regards himself. When he was entering Hyderabad, we are informed by Sabhasad, Abul Hasan Tana Shah wanted to accord him the customary welcome by going out for the purpose of receiving him. But Sevaji would not have it. Probably he did not consider himself worthy of such reception. His message was, “You should not come. You are my elder brother. I am your younger brother. You should not come forward.”† Still more surprising is the description of his relations with that monarch as given by Sevaji himself to the French. “In the first audience,” writes Francois Martin, the French Governor of Pondichery, “Sevaji complained against our people for having defied the king of Golkonda whom he called *his father, his lord, and his sovereign*.”\*

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\* See Sarkar's Shivaji, 3rd Ed., page 331.

† Sen's Siva Chhatrapati P. 121.

‡ F. B. S., page 277.

Those who have been trained in the Marhatha School will find the description of his relations with the occupant of the imperial throne of Delhi rather startling. It is affirmed very often that considering himself the representative of the 'regenerated' Hindus of the South he could not brook even for a moment the idea of his being a subordinate to the Moghal Emperor. It is submitted that there is nothing further from the truth than this vain assertion. There is nothing in the career of Sevaji to suggest that the notion of bending his head to the imperial authority was repugnant to him as a matter of political principle or of self-respect. Early in his life, at the time of Shahji's captivity at Bijapur he had entreated Prince Murad to secure Shah Jahan's pardon for the past misdeeds of his father, expressing a desire to serve the Emperor. Once more at the time of Aurangzeb's invasion of Bijapur in 1657 he offered his services to the imperialists. Though during the war he plundered the Moghal dominions, later on he applied for pardon and professed to repent for his past misconduct. Again, his mortification was complete at the hands of Jai Singh and Diler Khan. While standing at the door he begged an interview with the former, but the proud Rajput sent his



secretary with a most humiliating message directing the latter to meet Sevaji and tell him that "if he agreed to surrender all his forts he might come, otherwise he should turn back from the place." The treaty of Purandhar not only deprived him of the greater part of his territories, but what remained with him was left only 'on condition of loyalty and service to the Imperial throne.' He entered the Moghal service in the name of his son and agreed to send him with five thousand horse to attend on the Moghal governor of the Deccan, and excused himself from attending the court because "by reason of my late unwise and disloyal acts, I have not the face to wait on the Emperor. I shall depute my son to be His Majesty's servant and slave..." Like a penitent offender he had to give up for some time the wearing of his weapons and declare: "I shall serve the Emperor as one of his devoted but unarmed servants." Nay, he had to play the part of the servant of the servants of Aurangzeb. He was a recipient of favours from Jai Singh as well as Diler Khan. Henceforth for about three years he conducted himself first as the dutiful servant and then as the obedient vassal of the Emperor, observing, when necessary, all the formalities required by the



etiquette of the Moghal court. On the very next day after his surrender, like the humblest of Moghal mansabdars when placed in similar circumstances, he had to go forward for six miles on foot to welcome the imperial farman and to put on the robe of honour. During the Moghal invasion of Bijapur he rendered meritorious service, for which, as would have been so in the case of any other servant of the Empire, he received from the Emperor a letter of approbation, a robe of honour and a jewelled dagger. He was also commissioned to besiege Panhala. It is a different matter that he failed in the enterprize.\*

A distinguished authority on Marhatha History has been pleased to write that Sevaji "could not even in theory acknowledge the supremacy of the Great Mughal. Consequently when he had to submit to the terms imposed on him by Jai Singh, he got the stipulated mansab for his son Sambhaji, then a boy of seven, but did not degrade himself to the position of a Mughal mansabdar†". It is submitted that when after serving under the Moghal banner in

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\*See Sarkar's Shivaji, 3rd Ed., pages 126—138

†See Sen's Administrative System of the Marathas page 183.

the battle-field and carrying on the behests of the Mughal commander in the arena of war, he went to the imperial court, laid before the Emperor 1,500 gold pieces as *Nazr*, and Rs. 6,000 by way of *Nisar* and took a stand in the row of the Mughal nobility, there was nothing left to "degrade him to the position of a Moghal mansabdar."\* By his conduct he clearly showed that he intended to join the Moghal service. Indeed, his grievance against Aurangzeb by its very nature should set all doubts at rest. His complaint was that he was assigned the same rank as his servant Nitaji and his seven years old son Sambhaji were given even without going to the imperial court, and that he was made to stand behind Jaswant Singh 'whose back my soldiers have seen.' There was no question of Sevaji's not degrading himself to the position of a Mughal mansabdar. The fact was that Aurangzeb himself, rightly or wrongly, did not consider him worthy of that honour and dignity in the Moghal court which Sevaji claimed as his due and to which he aspired. Thus, as far as Sevaji is concerned he approached the foot of the Mughal emperor with the most sanguine expectation : and it was Aurangzeb only who

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\* See Sarkar's Shivaji, 3rd Ed. pages 143 and 144.

could have degraded the former by rejecting his services.

Even after his escape from Agra, for some time he kept up the attitude of reverence towards the Moghal government. He professed terror of the imperial army and offered to make his submission again and sent a contingent of 400 men under his son to fight under the Moghal banner. Later, he wrote to Jaswant Singh, "the Emperor has cast me off. Otherwise I intended to have begged the task of recovering Qandhar with my unaided resources. I fled (from Agra) in fear of my life. Mirza Raja, my patron, is dead. If through your intercession I am pardoned, I shall send Shambhu to wait on the Prince (Muazzam) and serve as a *mansabdar* at the head of my followers wherever ordered. (Dilkusha 69—70)." Sevaji's prayers were granted and during 1667-69, according to the testimony of the English factors he conducted himself as "Aurangzeb's vassal (bound) to do whatever is commanded by the Prince."\*

Lastly, the demand of Chauth which amounted only to one-fourth of the Government revenue by its very nature implied the acknowledgement

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\* See Sarkar's Shivaji, 3rd Ed. pages 163, 164 and 168.

of a rightfully constituted authority, as it was in the case of the Koli Rajas of Ramnagar, who collected Chauth from certain parts of Portuguese possessions. Why did Sevaji not require the Chauth-paying districts to stop making payments to the Moghal government and pay the whole amount to him instead? He ought to have proceeded not only boldly but also straightforwardly. The policy that he adopted is not that of the conqueror who claims possession of a land and the right of making assessments and collections simply because of the effective dispossession of his enemy, but that of the robber who has not the courage to challenge the authority of the rightful master but concerns himself only with what can be acquired, by means detestable or otherwise, in the absence of the protecting force supplied by the latter.

The above lines should be sufficient to make it clear that Sevaji as far as it was not inconsistent with his principles of robbery and freebooting was never slow in conducting himself respectfully towards the Moghal Emperor. With his methods of plunder and policy of depredation, his reverence also for the Emperor seems to have been inherited by the Marhatha sardars of the 18th century. Even in the palmy days of the

Peshwas the hold and impress of the house of Aurangzeb on Marhatha imagination were peculiarly its own. At a time when the fortunes of their predatory power were rapidly ascending and the authority of the Moghal Emperor was fast declining and drifting towards its ultimate downfall, the love and regard for the latter of Sahu, the grandson of Sevaji and the then Chhatrapati of the Marhatha people, were still so great that he 'objected to the construction of the Delhi Darwaza of Puna, saying that a gate facing the north would mean defiance and insult of the Badshah.' The first Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath was only too glad to get his master enrolled as a Mughal mansabdar, undertaking to perform all the duties of an imperial servant with professed obedience and humility. Sevaji had abstained from attempting the plunder of Burhanpur and Aurangabad, the Mughal capitals of the Deccan. The second Peshwa Baji Rao also 'refrained from causing any harm to the imperial metropolis when it lay at his mercy and the reason assigned for this conduct clearly shows how the Marhathas still respected the weak emperor'. The third Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao only conformed to the policy of his father and grandfather. The conquest of Malwa was effected by force of the

Marhatha arms, but the Peshwa could not deem its occupation legitimate until he had obtained a Farman for the same from the Emperor. After the disaster of Panipat the Peshwas more or less ceased to take active interest in the affairs of the North. But the attitude of their lieutenants remained the same. In the early seventies of the eighteenth century, Mahadji Sindhia found it necessary to beg the Emperor Shah Alam to come back from Allahabad and occupy the throne of his illustrious forefathers at Delhi. Sindhia in the course of time succeeded in establishing his authority over a considerable part of Northern India, but he preferred to rule it in the name of the emperor and as his servant. Though the Patel retained the substance of power in his own hands, he left the shadow in all its original glory and majesty without making any encroachment upon its sanctity. Nana Farnavis, the famous minister of Puna described the emperor in his autobiography as Prithvi Pati,\* the lord of the earth, at a time when the latter, not to speak

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\*Administrative System of the Marathas pages 183&184. While expressing my indebtedness to Dr. Surendranath Sen for the information of some of these facts which he has collected at one place and which were beyond the limits of my research I cannot help saying that it is indeed a novel interpretation which he has sought to put. Why should the weak, indolent,

of the Deccan, could not have made himself felt effectively even in the streets of Delhi. It has been seen already how Sevaji had to walk six miles in order to receive Aurangzeb's farman. That had happened at a time when the Marhatha power was in its humble infancy and when the Mughal Emperor was feared and respected throughout the length and breadth of the country. In the nineties of the 18th century, when the fortunes of the imperial house had sunk to the lowest ebb, and when the influence of the so-called confederacy extended from Hardwar in the North to the extreme South, the Peshwa Madho Rao Narain, the head and the representative of the Marhatha people, and his officers were still proud

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and easeloving Sahu whose, indifference to the matters of the state was equalled only by his own non-interference with the policy of the Peshawas and their subordinates, be able to dominate the imagination of the Marhatha people, who had been fighting till then for the sake of their **desh** and **dharma** so effectively—not only in his life but also after his death during the whole century of their existence in the country as a political power—as to take them away from the path of independence and liberty, chalked out for them by his grand father at a time when the Mughal Emperor dominated the land from one end to the other, and suddenly throw them back to the old status of allegiance and fidelity—nominal though it was—to a penniless and powerless person whose only recommendation was this that he represented the house of Aurangzeb ?



to receive the title of Vakil-i-mutluq from the Mughal emperor at his own capital Poona with the same pomp and ceremony as would have marked the occasion in the days of Akbar himself. The scene may be described in the words of the Historian of the Marhathas :—

"The following morning was appointed for the grand ceremony of investing the Peshwa with the title and dignity of Wukeel-i-mootluq. And Sindhia spared no pains to render it as imposing as possible. A grand suit of tents was pitched at a distance from his own camp. The Peshwa proceeded towards them with the most pompous form. At the further end of these splendid apartments, a throne meant to represent that of the emperor of the Moghals was erected, on which was displayed the imperial farman, the khillut or dresses of investiture, and all the principal insignia. The Peshwa, on approaching the throne, made his obeisance thrice, placed 101 gold mohars upon it as a nuzur or offering, and took his seat on its left..."\*

Such was the habitual respect which Sevaji and his successors were wont to show to the imperial house of Timur; and such was the halo of glory with which the Marhatha imagination had invested the person of the Mughal Emperor.

There is no dispute about the nature of treatment which Sevaji meted out to the Muhammadans as a religious community. It is not controversial

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\*Grant Duff's History of the Marathas Vol. III, page 78.



that it was one of regard and consideration. Historians speak of his reverence for the Muhammadan saint Baba Yaqut of Khelsi, and of his assignments of Inamlands and annuities to Muslim shrines and institutions. For this they rely on the testimony of Sabhasad who writes that the 'illumination of, and food offerings to the shrines of Muhammadan saints (peer) and the mosques of the Muhammadans were continued (by state allowance) according to the importance of (each) place'.\* Khafi Khan's remarks about his making 'it a rule that whenever his followers went plundering they should do no harm to the mosques, the Book of God, or the women of anyone', and about his being 'careful to maintain the honour of women and children of Muhammadans when they fell into his hands' have won very loud applause for him. But there is one aspect of the matter which is always overlooked. Could it have been possible for Sevaji to pursue this policy while engaged in a ceaseless religious crusade against the Muslim powers? One can imagine a refined military leader fighting a battle in the name of his religion and still enjoining his soldiers to abstain from causing any harm to his enemy's

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†Sens Siva Chhatrapati, page 39.

objects of religious veneration. But in the time of war a soldier must necessarily commit all sorts of excesses. It is not possible to believe that such injunctions could be carried on invariably and uniformly for such a long time as Sevaji's military career in those circumstances in which he is alleged to have been fighting. No one with any sense of responsibility ever described the wars of the Rajas of Vijainagar with their Muslim neighbours as religious crusades. Still those wars offer instances of the desecration of mosques and the destruction of the copies of the Koran. It is simply impossible to believe that Sevaji could carry on his wars in the name of his religion and motherland against three Muhammadan powers with so much vigour and enthusiasm as are ascribed not only to him but also to his followers without a copy of the Quran being burnt and without a mosque being damaged.\* The two circumstances are not compatible with each other. The truth of the latter preposition being accepted at all hands the former must necessarily be rejected.

Again, the fervour of a religious war by its very nature cannot be one-sided. The enthusiasm of one party must necessarily be reflected in the

activities of the other. The enemies of the European crusaders were no less zealous than they. But no such vigour ever marked the efforts of Savaji's opponents. No soldier of Bijapur or Delhi ever burnt with the fire of religion. All seem to have been as cold as snow. With the exception of Diler Khan whose name is inseparably associated with that of a much more energetic and able Hindu general Jai Singh, no officer of the first rank seems to have applied himself wholeheartedly against Sevaji. The Mughal officers have been very justly condemned for the lethargy shown in the Marhatha campaigns. This is not all. Some of them were, indeed, criminals of the first class. Of the minor officers, there was one Siddi Hilal, who, though in the Emperor's service, "used to write secretly to Sevaji everything that occurred in the Mughal head quarters;" and later on, when on one occasion was censured for his failure against the Marhathas, he openly deserted to the latter with all his followers. Of the officers of the first rank, Mahabat Khan, though a hereditary servant of the empire and a most responsible official, showed so much slackness in his operations against Marhathas that, rightly or wrongly, he was actually suspected by Aurangzib to have been bribed by Sevaji.

Bahadur Khan was another high official upon whom Sevaji tried his golden bait successfully. Though the viceroy and the commander-in-chief of the Mughal forces in the Deccan, he remained inactive all that time that Sevaji was absent in the Karnatic, and let that golden opportunity slip away unavailed. Not to speak of others, even prince Muazzam, though appointed to the same charge more than once, never showed much concern about the matter. At one time he was actually suspected by many to have united himself with Sevaji against his father. Of the Bijapuri nobles, Rustam-i-Zaman was notorious for his sympathies for the Marhatha chief. Many other grandees of that decadent kingdom were similarly suspected at some time or other to have been won over by Sevaji. Such was the nature of opposition that the members of the Muslim community offered to Sevaji's rise. Of the ordinary Muslims there were many who sided with him actively and openly. We hear of the Pathan soldiers entering his service. He also did not hesitate in giving responsible posts to the Muslims who joined him. Qazi Hyder who subsequently rose to be the Chief Qazi of Delhi was originally his employee. Two Muhammadans, Daulat Khan and Siddi Misri held the command of his fleet.

One should not fail to appreciate the significance of these appointments. Had Sevaji addressed himself to the task of suppressing the forces of Islam as such, neither would he have given such important pos'ts to the followers of that religion, nor would have the latter themselves probably entered his service. Their union became possible because both of them felt that the other was moved by wordly considerations only.

There is one more fact the significance of which no historian of to-day should fail to appreciate. As we saw, Prof. Jadunath Sarkar has based his account mainly on the letters, etc. of the English factors. This he has done very properly. Their factories were situated on all sides of Sevaji's dominions. They had great opportunity of informing themselves with what happened in different parts of the western Deccan. They had their own scouts to give them timely warnings of Sevaji's motives and intentions. Their letters were addressed to their own kith and kin ; and, therefore, we have no reason to suppose that they would intentionally give a distorted version, or suppress anything worth mentioning. Again, their letters cover a period of no less than 20 years of Sevaji's eventful life.

Their magnitude and the vastness of material contained in them may be judged from the fact that only a selection of what appeared *relevant* to Mr. Paranjpe has been published, as said above, in no less than 729 closely printed pages of 20×26. True, they occasionally received in-correct tidings, and consequently, sometimes we find them despatching erroneous news. But it cannot be believed for a moment that all of them should have failed for such a long time to note anything, however insignificant but nonetheless worth mentioning, about the Marhatha chief. The writers of these letters include among them no less shrewd observers than Oxindens, Gerald Aungier, Childe and Thomas Niccolls, whose despatches breathe intelligence and common sense. We see them warning home authorities against a proposed religious policy as likely to prejudice the Indian mind,\* commenting upon the bateful effects of the Portuguese attempts of conversion, speaking of the intolerance and folly of the Qazi of Surat,† and adversely criticizing Aurangzeb's religious policy.‡ As for Sevaji there is nothing about him which

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\*E. F. R., Vol. I, page 313 and 314.

†E. F. R., Vol. I, page 136 and 137.

‡E. F. R., Vol. I, page 120 and 121.

they do not say. They speak of his robberies and plundering raids and their effect upon trade. They record his fights with the Bijapuris and the Mughals, mentioning his triumphs as well as reverses. They speak of his secret understandings with the Mughal and the Bijapuri generals and of his dealings with the Portuguese and the king of Golkonda. In short, it is not too much to say that ever since he caught their attention, it is possible to trace his varying fortunes from their despatches from day to day. But the most significant thing about these letters is that they do not say a word, which by the widest stretch of imagination can be interpreted to mean an effort on his part to elevate Hindu society and Hindu religion. It is simply inconceivable that they would have failed to note only such features of Sevaji's conduct as would have created the impression in their minds that his activities were directed toward the betterment of Hindu religion and its social system. Had it occurred to anyone of them that Sevaji was fighting against the Muhammadans for the sake of his religion he would have necessarily made note of it. The significance of this omission should be duly appreciated. Anyone who has perused



the invaluable work of Sarkar on Sevaji knows that the English factory records constitute our most important source of information about the Marhatha chief. The absence of such material in such a vast and varied source is unaccountable. The only possible inference is that the factors had nothing of this kind to note and transmit. Writing everything about him, why should all of them conspire to maintain such a deep silence only in regard to his services to Hinduism ?

Obviously, Sevaji's private life did not concern them as much as his doings in public. Their letters speak a good deal about his strictly personal affairs, which abundantly proves his devoutness as a private Hindu. They record his living with the Brahmans; speak of his bathing at Gokarna\*; and mention his dedicating a golden umbrella† to a holy shrine. But they do not say a word about any benefit that might have accrued to his religion through him. We admit his being a devout Hindu of orthodox practices: we deny his taking up the cause of Hinduism against Islam.

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\*E. F. R., Vol. I, page 97.

†E. F. R., Vol. I, page 360.



Besides the factors, many contemporary travellers have left the record of their impressions and observations of Sevaji's time. Some of them have spoken of him only incidentally while others have given more or less detailed accounts of his deeds and character. Many of them were undoubtedly misinformed ; yet there are a few whose testimony is reliable and whose opinions deserve consideration. It is not possible to ignore the evidence of men like Bernier, Dellon, Fryer and Manucci. Their attitude towards him is just the same as that of the English factors. They tell everything about him, ranging from bazaar gossip to what they came to know from personal experience, but there is nothing in their writings to suggest his fighting in the interest of Hinduism against Islam. They describe his wars and plundering but do not make even a passing reference to what have been understood by the modern historians as causes underlying them. The significance of their being silent will be understood better if it is explained with reference to the conditions prevalent now. Was it possible for a foreigner to visit this country in 1930 and witness the everyday strikes, picketings and boycott demonstrations without at the same

time also noting the causes of the discontent responsible therefor? It would appear from "Foreign Biographies of Shivaji," "English Factory Records on Shivaji" and the "Source Book of Maratha History," Vol I, that no less than twenty such travellers have left their views about Sevaji. But none of them has said a word which may lend countenance to the theory of championship. This is not all; some of them attribute such deeds and such policy to him as are not only incompatible with the claim of championship but as would have put to disgrace any Hindu, prince or peasant. There was Nicholas Manucci, the Venetian traveller. No foreigner resided in India longer than he. He lived in this country for more than sixty years and witnessed all stages of the growth of the Marhatha power under Sevaji and after his death. He hated Aurangzeb so intensely that he was prepared to go so far as to suggest to the Marhathas an easy way of killing that emperor. In his *Storia* he openly rejoices at Mughals' reverses, and it is not without some unwillingness that he records their triumphs. But even he does not present the struggle of Sevaji and his successors against the empire as a war of national independence. Despite his strong

sympathy for the Marhathas the latter appear in his work as a band of robbers and Sevaji as their chief. This is substantially true of the accounts of all other travellers.

Now we come to the Persian histories. They have been written by Muhammadans as well as Hindus. As remarked above, they represent the point of view of Bijapur as well as Delhi. Most of these historians had had the experience of those circumstances which were Sevaji's own creation. Some of them admire his bravery, power of organization and perseverance, while others speak highly of his regard for holy men; but no one interprets his efforts as directed against Islam and aimed at the glorification of Hinduism. We may take up the case of Bhimsen Burhanpuri, the author of *Nuskha-i-Dilkusha*. He lived in the Deccan throughout his life, possessed a fair knowledge of Sevaji's affairs, and personally took part in the military operations conducted by Aurangzeb against the Marhathas. He appreciates many traits of the former's character. His book was not meant for the eye of the Mughal Emperor. Its language is not such as a court flatterer would have used. His account is singularly free from hyperbole and verbosity. Above all he was himself a Hindu. But to the Marhatha struggle

he does not give the colour of a religious war. There was nothing to prevent him from recording that they were fighting in the interest of their religion. The absence of such a suggestion in the work of a contemporary Hindu, being peculiarly significant, should be neither ignored nor should its importance under estimated.

The testimony of Muhammadan writers in Persian is much the same. It may be objected that as they were Muhammadans they had reason to suppress and misrepresent the real nature of Sevaji's deeds. The argument may appear to be convincing, but in reality it carries no force. Their works were primarily meant for the Muhammadan nobility of their own day. It cannot be supposed that they could apprehend the subsequent convulsions of the 18th century, the decline and the downfall of the Mughal empire, and the ushering in of a new era in India with such changed standards of public conduct as we find to-day. Had they felt that Sevaji was fighting for the sake of his religion, it would only have supplied them with additional reason to support the policy of their sovereign. And for that they had nothing to do but to state his alleged ambitions and aspirations and add a few more

abusive and vituperative epithets to his name.

With all respect for Sevaji's historians we cannot help saying that few of them have attempted to appreciate the true significance of the robberies and plundering excursions which constitute such a conspicuous part of his career. As noted above no contemporary writer ever observed that he discriminated between Hindus and Muhammadans in the course of those raids. All accounts agree in suggesting that all classes equally suffered at his hands.

The parts adjacent to Maharashtra being mostly populated by the Hindus, the defenceless villages and small towns, generally inhabited in them alone, in the very nature of the case must have had to bear the brunt of his raids. We frequently hear of the wrongs suffered by the Hindus at the hands of Muhammadan kings. Has anybody attempted to compute the loss, economic, moral, and material, which Hindu society suffered as a result of those incessant excursions of robbery and plunder which extended over a period of no less than thirty-four years of Sevaji's restless life? Taking into consideration the misery of untold of multitudes Hindus who must have been reduced to paupers

by his love of plunder, or who must have been rendered homeless due to his burnings and devastations, or who must have died a most cruel and painful death due to his novel methods of torture, I am definitely of opinion that to the Hindus of the Western Deccan, Kanara, Konkan, and the Karnatic, with whom only he came into contact, Sevaji did much more harm than Aurangzeb or anybody else.

This is about the writers of Persian and European languages. An analysis of the contemporary Marhatha writers' notions of Sevaji's aims and ideals would lead us to the same conclusion. Here we shall deal with Sabhasad only. Writing at a time when the so-called war of national independence was raging furiously he must have painted the character and deeds of his master as best he could, so that his countrymen labouring under exceptionally depressing circumstances might not abandon the ideal of religious emancipation. But in the whole of the *bakhar* there is not a word to suggest that Sevaji's ambitions included doing good to religion and motherland. When I read Dr. Sen's translation of Sabhasad for the first time I was struck by the difference between Sabhasad's "Sivaji" and the "Shivaji" of modern writers.

The "Shivaji" of modern writers may be seen in the works of Ranade, Takakhav, Sardesai and Savarkar. According to them his whole life was devoted to those sacred causes. But the "Sivaji" of Sabhasad was merely a robber and plunderer who sometimes aspired to make territorial annexations also, and who, at his best, does not seem to have been more than an ordinary ambitious ruler of medieval type. The words which Sabhasad puts into the mouth of Sevaji while describing the death of his father, Shahji, and the birth of his son, Rajaram, may be taken to indicate his own notions of Sevaji's ideals. On hearing the news of Shahji's death, he is reported to have said :—

"It would have been well if the Maharaj (Shahji) had (survived longer and) witnessed the heroic deeds of a son like me. Now to whom should I show my valour. Formerly I killed Afzal Khan, punished and defeated Saista Khan, and went to Delhi, after an interview with the Mirza Rajah. Having seen the Badshah I came back to my own kingdom. Then I captured many forts, plundered many towns and enlisted an army of 40,000 cavalry in Paga and Siledar."<sup>\*</sup>

Similarly the words, which Sevaji is alleged to have uttered when the news of Rajaram's birth was delivered to him, instead of showing his concern for Hindu religion, the service of which is

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<sup>\*</sup> Sen's Siva Chhatrapati, pages 90 and 91.



claimed to have been the one controlling passion of all his activities, prove that his expectations in regard to the future career of his dear son, did not necessarily include the glorification of Hindu religion. He expected his son to "upset the Badshahi of Delhi" to "make his subjects happy" to exercise power greater than that of his own and to preserve his name by earning fame, but does not seem to have expected him to distinguish himself as the champion of Hinduism\*

Sevaji's career is so full of duplicity, meanness, and baser vices too provocative to be detailed here, and so incompatible with anything grand and magnificent, that the noble ideals of love of religion and patriotism can never for a moment be imagined to have been the motive springs of his conduct. No one after dedicating his life to the service of his country has ever employed himself like Sevaji in ruining and devastating his own motherland so thoroughly, and yet so systematically. It is impossible to believe that one who was moved to extirpate those hardships under which the Hindus are said to have been groaning under the Muslim rule, would be promoting the interest

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\*Sen's Siva Chhatrapati, pages 100 and 101.



of those very Hindus by behaving so treacherously as Sevaji did towards the generality of them, and perpetrating such cruel barbarities as used to be inflicted by him on them in the course of his freebooting campaigns and plundering raids. Whether one sees him as he is represented in the accounts of the foreign writers, or as he is painted by the Persian chroniclers, or even as he is depicted at times by Sabhasad himself, one finds his character so repulsive and so disgusting that one cannot persuade himself to associate such inspiring ideals with the name of that robber, as it is done nowadays so commonly and so uncritically. His activities were designated by his contemporaries as "theft", "robbery", "brigandage" etc.; some of the adjectives that were heaped on him are "villain", "ruffian", "rougue", "thief", "robber" and "brigand". No national leader was ever given such ugly names even by his enemies. Not to speak of the foreign writers, even Sabhasad makes Aurangzeb, Afzal Khan, and his followers call him "حرامزاده" (bastard), a word never used for those who conduct themselves honourably. Such words and expressions point out unmistakably not only the nature of the effect that was produced by his unscrupulous deeds but also the sort of respect that could

have been paid to his name by a most ardent admirer who happened to be also his associate. A mind after being inspired once with the ideals of patriotism and love of religion can never stoop down to such depths of moral depravity as Sevaji's habitually did.

It is worth our while to consider those arguments of Sevaji's admirers at the hollow foundations of which the edifice of the championship has been so laboriously raised. It is said, in the first place, that the very idea of founding an independent state, which necessarily involved many dangers of life and property instead of taking himself to the easy and traditional policy of entering the service of some Muhammadan king, which would have offered him ample scope to provide himself with wealth and power, is by itself a proof of the fact that he dedicated his life to the cause of his country and community. It is submitted that in the contemporary records there is nothing to suggest that he started in life with the definite idea of founding an independent kingdom for himself. His conduct always, and especially in the beginning of his career, resembled more that of a robber and brigand than that of a ruler and king.

Secondly, even if it be conceded that even in the early stages he was possessed with the idea of founding an independent kingdom it will not in any case be tantamount to his championing the cause of Hinduism against Islam. It will only signify his being an ambitious Hindu which is neither peculiarly meritorious nor relevant to the issue of championship. Thirdly, his own unscrupulous methods and turbulent spirit had rendered him totally unfit for the service of any organized state whose officers would be necessarily required to exercise restraint over themselves. Fourthly, it cannot be said that he could not reconcile himself to the idea of carrying on the behest of any Muslim king. More than once in the name of his son, and at least once in his own name, as said above, he joined the Mughal service, and went to the imperial Court with great expectation of honour and promotion.

Secondly, it is urged that had he not devoted his life to the cause of Hindu religion he would not have received the support of Ramdas, Tukaram, and other saints of Maharashtra. My submission is that in view of the fact that in the contemporary records these saints are conspicuous by their absence this contention falls

to the ground. The supporters of Ramdas Swami have 'discovered' 800 Ramdasi Muths for Sevaji's propaganda. But not even one of them has been mentioned in the letters of the English factors, the accounts of the foreign travellers, Persian histories, Sabhasad Bakhar, Jedhe Shakavali, Jedhe Kareena, Tarikh-i-Shivaji, and Raigarh Bakhar. This is only a later growth and does not deserve our serious consideration.

Thirdly, it is asserted with great force that Sevaji at the instance of Ramdas gave to his flag the orange colour which is peculiarly favoured by Hindu Sanianysis. It is contended that he would never have done so had he not been moved by the considerations of Hindu religion. My reply is again the same. It is nowhere mentioned in the contemporary records that the colour of his flag was orange. On the other hand we know how on one occasion his soldiers in course of their struggle for the occupation of Khanderi island raised a white flag.\* This fact, in the absence of strong and positive evidence to the contrary, is sufficient to prove that the colour of Sevaji's flag was white and not orange. In all probability this Bhagwa Jhanda also is a

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\*E. F. R., Vol. II, page 262.

later growth and should not influence our judgment while considering the merits of Sevaji's claim.

Very great weight is attached to an order said to have been given by Sevaji at the time of his coronation that his ministers, clerks, and others were to use in future Marhathi and Sanskrit words in place of those of Persian and Arabic. It is contended that this order shows Sevaji's anxiety to remove the cultural bondage of the Hindus and revive the indigenous civilization. My submission, in the first place, is that even if we do not challenge the factum of the said order, which is very doubtful, it cannot in any case amount to a proof of his championing the cause of Hinduism. Every Hindu ruler of those days was bound to be surrounded by Brahmans, and this order at its best could have been given only for their convenience. No other contemporary writer corroborates Sabhasad on this point ; and his own vocabulary raises a strong presumption to the contrary. His work is full of Persian and Arabic words and bears such a deep impress of Muhammadan influence that it is most unlikely that such an order was ever given with the fixed purpose of their elimination. In the event of there being such a desire of Sevaji

himself, at least Sabhasad who cherished his master's memory so dearly would have made conscious attempt to use Sanskrit and Marhathi words instead of those of Persian and Arabic. The latter dominated Marhathi so effectively (the work of Sabhasad serving only as a specimen) in the years following Sevaji's death and continued to hold their own so steadily even in the days of the Peshwas that we cannot but conclude that no such movement was ever launched. The fact is that the Marhathas even after their rise under the Peshwas remained so long under the Muhammadan influence that "Persian" as Dr. Sen puts it "has not failed to leave a lasting impression not only upon the Marathi vocabulary, but also its style and syntax." The late Mr. V. K. Rajwade drew a table to trace the process of the gradual elimination of Persian and Arabic words from Marhathi. But what strikes me most is not the prospect of their total elimination which has not taken place as yet, and of which the historians of Maharashtra do not seem to be fully conscious, but the slowness with which Sanskrit has recovered its own, despite the political ascendancy of the Brahmans for such a long time. Its revival was only the natural corollary of the

rise of the latter. That Arabic and Persian, could hold the ground so tenaciously and for such a long time, in spite of Brahman domination is, in my opinion, a conclusive proof of the fact that no such movement was brought into play, and that their elimination, except that which has been caused by the English educated nationalists of modern times, was not the result of any conscious attempt. This will be understood better by means of an illustration. In the days of Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, as his oral and written discourses show, English had come to dominate Urdu so effectively that it constituted a serious menace to Persian, Bhasha, etc. But the subsequent years were a period of reaction, which was neither strengthened by political forces nor was potentially as strong as the Marhatha movement is alleged to have been. Even then it is not too much to say that any word of English a synonym of which can be found, in spite of some difficulty, in Bhasha, Persian, and Arabic is now invariably rejected in favour of the latter languages. What a great change and yet in such a short period? Sabhasad compiled his work about 20 years after Sevaji's coronation and 14 years after his death. Had there been any similar movement in the case of Marhathi not

only would it have got rid of Persian and Arabic long before but that movement also would have been reflected in the account of Sabhasad himself.

Sometimes much stress is laid on the letter said to have been addressed by Sevaji to Aurangzeb on the subject of *jazia*. Unfortunately its authorship has not been satisfactorily established. Robert Orme ascribed it to Raja Jaswant Singh and Colonel Todd to Rana Ram Singh. However the English translation of the letter may be read in Sarkar's Shivaji, third edition, pages 327-330. Suffice it to say that it does not contain anything that could lend countenance to the theory of *championship*. It could very well have been written by any other Hindu of some power and position. A perusal of the letter will show that the first two pages are devoted to the glory of the rules of Akbar, Jahangir, and Shah Jehan and the prosperity which the country had enjoyed in their times. The third mainly deals with the discontent and unrest due to poverty and taxation alleged to have been then widespread. The fourth proceeds to say that Hinduism and Islam are essentially one, as God is styled in the Quran Rabb-ul-Alamin, the Lord of all men, and not Rabb-ul-Muslemin, the Lord of the Muslims only.



The last but one para of the letter is very significant. It advises the Emperor to levy the *jazia* first on Rana Raj Singh "who is the head of the Hindus. Then it would not be so very difficult to collect it from me as I am at your service." There are even hints to Aurangzeb's religious zeal but the one notable thing is that the writer nowhere asserts himself as the protector of the Hindus and the custodian of their civic rights. In fact any other Hindu of that time without having served the cause of Hinduism and without having the ambition of serving the cause of Hinduism could have written the letter. There is nothing extraordinary to mark out the writer as the champion of the Hindu cause.

Let us now consider Prof. Sarkar's opinion on this point. While perusing his book one understands that according to him Sevaji was no more than a powerful robber and plunderer who lost no opportunity that was offered to him of aggrandizing himself at the expense of his weak or unwary neighbours. Neither his doings seem to be animated by the love of Hindu religion or motherland nor do the Hindus themselves seem to be especially attached to him. But near the end of the book one sadly discovers that he believes in Sevaji's

championship. The following words will give his own view of the matter as well as the authority he relies upon :

"To the Hindu world in that age of renewed persecution Shivaji appeared as the star of a new hope, the protector of the ritualistic paint mark (tilak) on the forehead of the Hindus, and the saviour of Brahmans (Bhushions poems)."\*

It is indeed surprising that a historian of Prof. Sarkar's responsibility and position should have made such a sweeping remark in regard to such a controversial topic on the sole testimony of poet who by the very nature of his work is bound to make exaggerations, misrepresentations, and falsifications. Some of the modern historians have gone to the length of calling Akbar an enemy of Islam. But no poet ever composed any *qasida* in praise of the emperor in which he was not eulogized as the "Defender" and the "Propagator" of that faith. Prof. Sarkar gives no other authority for holding this view, because, it is obvious, he can give none. Then the evidential value of Bhushan's Granthavali even as a poetical work, is very dubious. He writes himself on page 415 of his book that it is a "Fulsome adulation of Shiva, by means of an infinite variety of similes and parallels from

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\*Sarkar's Shivaji, 2<sup>rd</sup> Ed., page 384.

Hindu Scriptures and epics. *No history, no date.* But shows us the atmosphere and the Hindu mind of the time: *Its authenticity has been denied and its composition ascribed to the court of Chhatra Sal (about 1725), by a critic in the Nagri Pracharini Patrikha.*" Seeing that even its authenticity is not indisputably established, one is at a loss to understand how he could think that it showed the "atmosphere and Hindu mind of the time". The fact is that even after holding Shivadigvijay, Shivapratap, etc., inadmissible in evidence, he could not get rid of the notion created by those forged accounts and the works based on them. Had he taken stock of the situation after rejecting fabrications and concoctions and studied the material left to him a little more carefully, he might have come to the conclusion that it was not safe for him to eulogize Sevaji as the protector of the ritualistic paint mark (tilak) on the forehead of the Hindus and the saviour of Brahmans.

We shall now speak of those deeds of Sevaji which are not only inconsistent with the claim of championship but which would have put to disgrace any Hindu Prince, however indifferent he might have been to the commandments of

Hindu religion ; and we are sure that they indicate Sevaji's real attitude toward the objects of Hindu veneration. We cannot proceed further without begging our readers to read these few lines with a calm and dispassionate mind.

Let us begin with Sevaji's service to his *Desh*. He is very commonly applauded for his love of countrymen and motherland. It is asserted that it was due to this love that he endeavoured to found a Marhatha state. Let us see whether any one of his contemporaries has left his views on the matters under consideration. Now the sentiment of patriotism, as it is popularly understood, is not an original part of the Indian native genius. We have only imported it with the European rule and European literature. In the writings of our ancestors it is difficult to find even hints of such a sentiment. Hence it is not in the least surprising that the evidence of any Indian writer is not available on this point. This ought to have been known to the Marhatha writers, especially the discoverers of "old Bakhars." However, a European traveller, Abbe Carre, who attempted to apply his national standard of judgment to Sevaji's conduct has expressed himself in the following words :

"His valour shone in the war he waged against the King of Visapour (Bijapur), and if he had not stained his great deeds by the **disgrace attached to his ruining the motherland** he would have deserved unbounded praise."\*

In regard to Sevaji's "valour" and "great deeds" we shall speak in the last chapter. Here we are concerned with his patriotism only, the idea of which is contained in the words in bold type. The evidence of Abbe Carre cannot be overlooked. He has been characterised by Dr. Surendranath Sen as an "impartial eye witness" and as Sevaji's "enthusiastic admirer."

Those who do not follow Hinduism are often struck by Hindus' attachment to their rites and ceremonies, which they solemnly perform on the occasion of their festivals. These performances have been enjoined upon them by their religion and they constitute an integral part of their social system. It would not be unreasonable to suppose that Sevaji, as the leader of the movement of Hindu regeneration, must have been exerting himself to the best of his ability to provide his Hindu compatriots with all conceivable facilities on the days of their religious celebrations. But the facts of history are startlingly different. This "Sword-arm of

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\*F. B. S. page 208.

Hindu revival", like the true robber that he was, far from helping his co-religionists on those occasions, either violently exploited their hospitality, which was prompted by solemnity of the event to be commemorated, by practising fraud and treachery upon them, or struck them hard by taking them unawares and robbing and plundering them at a time they would have been otherwise engaged in worshipping their gods or doing any other acts of religious piety. The following events will show that he pursued this policy most relentlessly.

He acquired the fort of Purandhar by practising fraud upon its Brahman commandants on the holy day of Divali. The fort had legitimately belonged to the King of Bijapur on whose behalf an old Brahmin Qiladar was living there. Since the latter's death his two sons like the fabulous cats had been fighting for the charge amongst themselves. Sevaji went forward and neatly played the part of the monkey arbitrator. On the occasion of Diwali he got himself admitted as a guest and settled their dispute once for all. In the night, while fast asleep, the brothers were surprised and chained and all their belongings attached. Yet all this, though done in a most shameless

manner and against all dictates of conscience and social etiquette, was enacted by Sevaji on the day of a great Hindu festival and at a time when he as a guest was morally bound not to molest his hosts. Similarly he captured Supa treacherously on the day of another Hindu festival by taking advantage of its Qiladar's being off his guard. The fort was situated in the *jagir* of Shahji which had been given to him by the Bijapur Government. He had appointed there a brother of his second wife as Qiladar, who was thus Sevaji's maternal uncle. But as the latter's perfidy knew no kinship he turned this fact to account most disgracefully. "Sivaji," says Sabhasd, "went to see him on the pretence of asking for '*post*' on the day of Simga festival. The *mama* (uncle) was thrown into prison . . . All his belongings and clothes were taken possession of, and Supe annexed."\* This is how Sevaji sometimes spent the days of Hindu celebrations.

The greatest of all Hindu festivals is Dasahra and throughout the country it is celebrated with pomp and ceremony. But on this holiday of Hindus the armies of Sevaji used to march

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\*Sen's Siva Chhatrapati, page 4.



out for the purposes of robbery, plunder and free-booting. However, we are told in the Jedhe Shakhavali that in 1673, "on the auspicious day of Vijaya Dashami... Shivaji went and looted Bankapur."\* Thus was the victory of Ram over Ravan commemorated by actually inflicting or by starting on such excursions as necessarily involved inflicting upon the peaceful Hindu population such misery and pain and torture as necessarily constituted an inseparable part of every Marhatha campaign.

The next most popular festival of the Hindus is Holi. It falls in the spring, and Hindus, forgetting the worries and anxieties of the world, spend its few days in merry-making. But Sevaji, we learn, always utilized the occasion for robbing and plundering innocent people. We are told how most disgracefully he attempted to surprise Karwar in the Holi of 1668, but the timely, though unexpected, arrival of Sher Khan saved the town from destruction at his hands. And he had to be content with a small sum that the merchants of the town contributed to him. "With this," say the English factors, "Sevajee departed 28th February, very unwillingly,

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\*S. B. M., page 37.



saying that Shere Caune had spoiled his hunting at his Hule [Holee], which is a time he generally attempts some such designe."\* Nothing can show better than the words quoted above the moral depravity of Sevaji, who, we see, was not only so shameless as to regard Holi a time of hunting for himself, but could go so far as to blame Sher Khan, a Muhammadan, for having spoiled his game. The last part of the sentence is very significant. It shows clearly that it was a settled policy with him to make such attacks on those very occasions when the Hindus, who constituted the bulk of the population, could be surprised with greater ease and surety, and, far from confining his raids to the Muslims only, he selected those very occasions which were especially suitable for looting the former.

Historians, including Prof. Jadunath Sarkar, loudly speak of Sevaji's devoting his life to the defence of the Brahmans. Martin has recorded the treatment which the Marhathas meted out to the family of his Brahman servant during Sevaji's Karnatic campaign. This instance serves as an index to the consideration and regard which Sevaji and his men generally showed to them. The French Governor writes :

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\*E. F. R., Vol. 1., page 99.

"Our Bramen (Brahman) was always pursued, it was pretended that he must represent his brother who had managed the affairs of the Generallissimo Baloulcam at Porto Novo as I have already mentioned. There were even orders for arresting him. It was necessary to finish this matter. He could not find a surer means than to go to Sivagy for getting an assurance from him. After his departure they caused to be sealed the door of his house where his father and mother, each aged more than 80 years, were shut with the women and the children, and it was forbidden to let anything enter or leave. however, as there was no justice in letting people of such age and innocent children die of hunger, I caused the "seals" to be removed so that people had the liberty to bring them the necessities."\*

This is a good illustration of how Sevaji's officers, in their hunger of gold, could stoop down so low as to cause such things to be done as might in all probability result in Brahmanicide. This particular instance of crime becomes still more repulsive when one remembers that the Marhathas were starving to death these old people, women, and children when the young men of the house were absent abroad.

The account of Dr. Fryer who had himself travelled through Sevaji's dominions is still more disgusting. While speaking of the ruthless exactions of Sevaji's government he refers to the

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\* F. B. S., page 308.

treatment which the Marhathas meted out to some Brahmans in the following words :

" They have now in limbo several Brachmins (Brahmans) whose flesh they tear with pincers heated red hot, drub them on the shoulders to extreme anguish, (though according to to their law it is forbidden to strike a Brachmin)."†

Nothing can show more clearly than these few words the unscrupulous conduct of Sevaji's officers and the extent of atrocities they could perpetrate upon the Brahmans. Hinduism regards them as the repositories of holy learning, as the intermediaries between God and man, nay, as the gods of creation. Still the Marhathas were so ruthless that in their mad desire of exacting money they could go so far as to inflict such barbarities upon them. It is to be remembered that the words of Fryer cannot be easily passed over. He was one of the most intelligent and well informed foreign observers who have ever touched the coast of India. He had personal experience of Sevaji's territories and there is no reason to hold him unduly harsh in his strictures. The contention of Dr. Sen that Fryer's story is baseless and does not seem to be founded on personal experience carries no

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† S. B. M., pages 220 and 221.

force.\* There is evidence of some other persons also about Sevaji's roughly treating the objects of Hindu veneration whenever they were supposed to have been capable of yielding any monetary gain. This is by no means the solitary instance. He has attempted in vain to meet the testimony of Fryer by quoting a few irrelevant words from Dellon. The latter's evidence, as will shortly appear, is still more unfavourable to him.

It may be objected that Brahmans of whom Martin and Fryer speak were men of the world and were Brahmans in name only. This objection must fail in view of the express injunctions of the Hindu religion that all Brahmans are to be equally spared. Moreover, we know something of the treatment which Marhathas meted out to one of the *Pandarams* of the eastern Karnatic. These were ascetic mendicants and led such a simple and austere life and commanded such a great influence that Manucci was tempted to call them Hindu Bishops. Martin writes about one of them in the following words :—

" Sivagy's officers continued their outrages on the inhabitants (of this part). There were some ancient grants made

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\* See Sen's Administrative System of the Marathas, pages 103 to 105

by the princes of the country to diverse private people. These were resumed (including) even those of the Hindu Pandarams, they are people almost retired from the world to a life apparently very austere. There was one of these Pandarams in a small village north of Pondicherry who derived a large revenue from lands granted even by some Mahometten princes though they were of a hostile religion. This man, who passed for saint among the Hindus, gave food to all the travellers generally without distinction of religion or race. I had the curiosity of seeing there one evening sixty travellers eat, they rationed themselves at his place, to each was judiciously given a quantity of country food sufficient to satisfy a man. Sometimes there met nearly 1,000 people on their return from a (place of) pilgrimage that is near it and none was ever denied (food). The Pandaram was not spared, the least part of his revenue was exacted from him, though the Bramens perform the function of priests and sacrifices among the Hindus and they should on that account maintain the religion, their self-interest carried them so far as to refuse to celebrate a festival that was made every year in a pagoda, two small leagues from Pondicherry, because they found that they would have to bear the expense thereof. They permitted some private people to make the expenditure (in this connection), a number of people from different places came there, each made his offerings according to his means or his devotion. The festival, that lasted for 11 days being over, the same Bramens wanted to know how much amounted the cost of the ceremony and the receipt from the offerings. It was found that somewhat more was received which they seized. Their interest alone forms the religion of the Bramens."\*

From this fairly long extract the following few inferences may be safely drawn. The

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\*F. B. S. pages 327 and 328.

ascetic Hindu mendicants, who made no private use of their wealth but generally spent it on religious and charitable purposes, did not always enjoy immunity from Sevaji's exactions. Even their holdings could be resumed most shamelessly and mercilessly by the officers of this champion of Hinduism. Here we have got the case of a holy man of the Hindus, who was leading a retired and austere life and passed for a saint among them. Although he generally spent his income in feeding travellers, especially Hindu pilgrims, even then Sevaji's officers exacted the last pie of his income. Secondly the lot of the Hindu religious institutions was incomparably worse under Sevaji than it had been under the Muhammadan kings. Here we are clearly told of a Hindu priest who derived a large income from lands granted to him even by some Muhammadan princes, "though they were of a hostile religion." This particular instance in regard to his respect and consideration for Hindu priests and Hindu endowments puts him on a lower level than his Muhammadan predecessors. Thirdly, those Hindus, especially the Brahmans, who followed his train, far from imbibing any pious and ennobling influences seem to have become

pitifully degenerate, morally as well as spiritually. Never had any Brahman conducted himself so shamelessly as the members of that caste did in the company of Sevaji. Being the priests of his army they not only refused to celebrate a festival on account of the expense but they went so far as to seize the little surplus which had remained with those who had taken the trouble of celebrating it, and which as a matter of right ought to have gone to them. This want of sense of duty, propriety, and justice and this robberlike impatience were in our opinion the natural results of their living in the company of that tyrannical robber.\*

According to Sir Jadunath Sarkar "the higher minds of Maharashtra . . . had begun to look up to Shivaji as the champion of Hinduism" (page 209) and that it was one of the reasons why he wanted to be formally crowned. If Sevaji ever appeared glorious in his life it must have been at the time of his coronation. And he on

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\* At another place Martin writes about the conduct of Brahmans: "There was always something to say about the conduct of the Brahmans, their spite in committing treachery and at last unscrupulously hurling themselves as on lost bodies on all occasions where there was chance of getting money. I have already said enough about it, it seems to me that one ought to know this wicked caste." F. B. S., page 331.



his part did not fail in generosity and liberality to all those persons, especially the Brahmans, who assembled at Raigarh on that occasion. That was a time when in the case of any other Hindu prince all previous sins of commission and omission would have been forgotten or at least overlooked. But that was not to be for Sevaji. His acts of violence and cruelty were too provoking for that. For his past misdeeds he was actually fined by the Brahmans, and had to make atonements for the sins committed previously. Nay, at that psychological moment in the presence of thousands of Hindus who had assembled at Raigarh from various parts of India, this champion of Hinduism was accused for having been responsible for the death of Brahmans, cows, women, and children and fined Rs. 8,000. What is still more striking is Sevaji's own silence. He did not challenge the truth of these allegations. He did not recount his services to Hinduism. In fact he pleaded guilty by meekly paying the sum demanded.\* The historians of this generation are at liberty to say anything they like. But in the eyes of the Brahmans of that age Sevaji must have been far short of even ordinary Hindu rulers.

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\* See F. B. S., page 388 and Sarkar's Shivaji 3rd. ed. page 214.



According to certain historians Sevaji styled himself as Go Brahman Pratipalak, i.e., the Protector of Brahmans and cows. We have seen just now how he used to protect Brahmans. Now it is deemed necessary to say a few words about his treatment of cows also. Cow slaughter has been described as the perennial source of trouble between Hindus and Muhammadans. It will be interesting to know how this champion of Hinduism addressed himself to the task of stopping that practice. In the genuine contemporary records there is not a word to suggest that Sevaji ever required any Muhammadan to desist from slaughtering cows. Nor are we told there of any such measures as he might have taken towards stopping that practice by indirect means. Obviously, as should be expected from a man of his temperament and occupation, he remained indifferent to the question. This is not all. Cows, though they should not concern themselves with the affairs of kings and rajas, have crept into the records of his life to show his wanton disregard of the Hindu religion whenever it happened to collide with his self-interest. The factors of Carwar wrote to Bombay on 22nd Aug, 1675, after the occupation of the former by the Marhathas :

"The Semidar having received of the country people that keeps buffaloes and coves according to their Rajapore custome and is endeavouring to impose that according to our order as a duty that never was demanded by the Moors ; they upon this have seized upon all their buffaloes and coves and tell us with all they will never returne them till our servants doe fully satisfy the Rajapore duty, so that we believe they will remain in the Semidar's power, till Mr. Oxendon our chiefe comes down for wee are resolved never to condescend that our servants shall pay them anything for their release-ment ; we have an invincible . . . to passe by soe many wrongs . . . " \*

Another letter written from the same place to Bombay only seven days afterwards is more expressive :

"As for affairs at present they are as we formerly advised you, the Simidee (Jamindar or Zamorin) maintaining his vyolence and preamitarily tells us that he will not lett goe our servant's cattle without they will complye with their Rajahpore custome which they say is to pay for each buffillo four Larrees and for a cow one, we are adviced that they pay at Rajahpore (?) Larrees a buffilo and one for a cow that is not all for they demand custome of buffaloes and coves for the former years when the country was governed by the Mores, we lye very quiet waiting with impatience Mr. Oxindon's coming downe to meete with some satisfaction towards the repairing our Honour. Wee judge wee shall derive a very little trade if the country continues subject to Sevajee's tyrafiny . . . " †

The above extracts are sufficient to show how Sevaji and his government looked upon

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\*E. F. R., Vol. II, page 67.

†E. F. R., Vol. II, pages 67 and 68.

cows. The taxing of cows is not only inconsistent with the claim of championship but is also highly injudicious and impious for a good Hindu. Such a tax, we are told, was never levied by Muhammadan rulers but an innovation of the government or mis-government of Sevaji. The duty was not confined to Karwar only but seems to have been prevalent in other parts also of his dominions, for we are told that it had been in vogue at Rajapur which the Marhathas had occupied as early as 1661. From the economic point of view the policy was still more objectionable. It indirectly compelled the tax payer to dispose of the sacred kine to the butcher.

Of all the objects of Hindu veneration it is only temples which remain to be considered. It would be interesting to know how Sevaji's contemporaries thought of his reverence for them. The French traveller Dr. Dellon, who visited the western coast of India in 1669-71, after mentioning, among other matters, the consideration shown to apes in his dominions goes on to say about him :

"He (Sevaji) has made himself so dreadful to his neighbours as to have made the city of Goa itself tremble at his approach and has several times made those of Suratte

"The Semidar having received of the country people that keeps buffloes and coves according to their Rajapore custome and is endeavouring to impose that according to our order as a duty that never was demanded by the Moors ; they upon this have seized upon all their buffloes and coves and tell us with all they will never returne them till our servants doe fully satisfy the Rajapore duty, so that we believe they will remain in the Semidar's power, till Mr. Oxindon our chiefe comes down for wee are resolved never to condescend that our servants shall pay them anything for their release-ment ; we have an invincible . . . to passe by soe many wrongs . . . " \*

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feel the direful effects of his fury, by plundering all the country round about, and carrying away great riches, without sparing either Mosques or the **pagan-temples.**"\*

The last part of the sentence is very significant. It clearly describes the contemporaneous impression of Sevaji's deeds. The evidence of a contemporary that he could plunder even temples should give a death blow to the theory of championship. We need not stress the point any more. Suffice it to say that contemporary records are not only generally silent in regard to his attitude towards Hinduism, but that they also contain such passages as tell us of his torturing Brahmans, maltreating cows, and plundering temples, and of his making use of the Hindu festivals for the purposes of robbing and plundering his own coreligionists. Sevaji's admirers are at liberty to pursue their own ways. But a careful study of the contemporary records would convince anyone that his championship of Hinduism is only a figment of the imagination—as baseless and as fantastic as it would be for the future historian to assert some three centuries hence that Gandhi was a great general who defeated the British in April and May of 1930 in four pitched battles near Dundee and

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\*E. F. R., Vol II, page 347.

drove them out of India by sheer force of arms.

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## CHAPTER IV

## THE MURDER OF AFZAL KHAN

Sevaji's name is associated with numerous exploits but none of them is more fondly recollected and more passionately remembered than his murder of Afzal Khan. The popular imagination of Maharashtra has invested the event with a peculiar halo of glory and sanctity. The imaginary picture of the scene of his killing the invited guest, despite its inherently repulsive character, is more frequently met by a traveller at Poona and other towns of the Marhatha country than he can look upon without feeling disgusted.

The Marhathas' standard of morality in the days of Sevaji and for a long time afterwards remained very low, and, in the present circumstances, it is not possible to trace with precision the history of their interpretation of the deed. But the weight of evidence is on the side that their past notion of the incident was very different from the present one. However, some modern historians have tried to give retrospective effect to their own explanation. "To the Marathas" says Prof. Sarkar "the fight with Afzal has always appeared as at once a war of national



liberation and a crusade against the desecrator of temples. To them Afzal Khan typifies the bold bad man, who combines treachery with frightfulness, and defies God and man alike. Their historians from the earliest times have seen no element of murder in the incident, but always described it as a glorious example of the sagacity, courage and agility with which their national hero averted a treacherous plot against his own life, made the treachery recoil on the plotters head, and avenged the outraged shrines of their gods."\*

This is not only the Marhatha interpretation of the deed but Prof. Sarkar's own opinion also, which, as will shortly appear, requires to be reconsidered in the light of his own views that he has expressed about the evidential value of different sources.

The European historians have characterised the incident as a deed of atrocity perpetrated most treacherously. On the other hand, the Marhatha school and the Bengali writers have tried to explain it away as "an act of self-defence". Formerly in the popular imagination as well as in the textbooks prescribed for the Anglo-Indian schools

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\* Sarkar's Shivaji page 71.

and colleges Sevaji occupied the position of a treacherous assassin. But since the publication of the books of the latter which in their turn were preceded and followed by an intense propaganda for purging him of his heinous crimes, the current has been flowing in the opposite direction. It has been carried on so systematically and so skilfully that now it has come to be believed almost universally that it was Afzal Khan himself who "meant treachery" and what Sevaji did was no more than "preventive murder." An attempt will be made in this chapter to show that this view of the matter is erroneous. After analysing and sifting very carefully all available evidence we have come to the conclusion that Sarkar and Sen, especially the former—not to speak of the Marhatha historians who would defend Sevaji even at the cost of decency—are not justified in their bold assertions even on the basis of those documents they seek to interpret in his favour.

In Persian histories, without any exception, the deed is painted as a premeditated murder. In their descriptions of the incident there is absolutely nothing to suggest that Afzal Khan also contemplated perfidy. But their evidence as usual shall not be considered. Besides them,

Abbe Carre, Francios Valentine, Fryer, Nicholas Manucci, the writers of 91 qalmi Bakhar, Jedhe Shakavali and Kareena, Sabhasad, and the English factors of Rajapur speak of the incident. It is only on the basis of the Rajapur letter written by Revington and the Sabhasad Bakhar, especially the latter, that the apologists of Sevaji usually contend and which they seek to interpret in his favour. The rest—it seems that according to them also—without any exception fasten treachery upon the head of Sevaji alone without saying anything that can be construed as perfidious on the part of the Bijapuri general. But in spite of the fact that they were like Revington and Sabhasad Sevaji's absolute contemporaries they are simply ignored.

After reading the Rajapur letter and the account of the incident in Sabhasad Bakhar we have come to the conclusion that even on the basis of these two no charge of treachery can be made out against Afzal Khan. Not to speak of the former, which is rather explicit on the point of Sevaji's guilt, there is much intrinsic evidence even in the work of the Marhatha historian to establish the factum of his murdering Afzal Khan treacherously without there being any such design on the part of the latter.

## THE RAJAPUR LETTER.

We shall first take up the letter of the English factors. On 10th December, 1659, Henry Revington and Randolph Taylor reported the matter to the Company in the following words:

" . . . against whom (Sevaji) the Queene this yeare sent Abdle Ckaune (Afzal Khan) with an army of 10,000 horse and foote; and because she knew with that strength hee was not able to resist Sevagy, she councelled him to pretend friendship with his enemy, which he did. And the other (whether through intelligence or suspicion it's not known) dissembled his love toward him, and sent his mother as a hostadge, assuring him of his reality ; upon which Abdle Ckaune advances and the two armies lay within little distance of each other, while with a party from each theis two went to meete and embrace each other. And having had some discuss publiquely, they desired to bee private : when Sevaji with a dagger from out of his bosome stabled the other to the hart."\*

It is obvious that no charge of treachery can be brought against Afzal Khan on the basis of this letter, for we are nowhere told that he attempted to kill or capture his opponent. It was only the latter who "with a dagger from out of his bosom stabbed the other to the heart." Unless any such attempt is shown to have been made by him at the interview, it is useless to contend that he "meant treachery". On the other hand, it is in the conduct of Sevaji

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\* E. F. R., V. I, page 3.

that we find fraud and deceitfulness. Secondly, we are not informed specifically that the Queen "counselled him to pretend friendship" with a view to kill or capture Sevaji. Such a counsel could have been very well given with the object of winning him back. There was nothing extraordinary in this advice for he was after all the son of a servant and nobleman of that kingdom and she could have very reasonably hoped to reconcile him to his liegeland by peaceful means.

The words upon which Sevaji's apologists rely are : "She (Queen) counselled him to pretend friendship with his enemy which he did". Let us see whether these words can be construed to mean that the Queen advised Afzal Khan to make a show of friendship with any sinister object. In the preceding words we are informed that his army was deemed insufficient for the task of subduing. In the words that immediately follow we are told of his acting in accordance with the advice, i. e., of his pretending friendship. The first part of the next sentence suggests that somehow or other Sevaji came to know of his mind or of the advice given to him by the Queen and made a false show of love toward him. In the second

part of the same sentence we are told of his (Sevaji's) sending "his mother as a hostage, assuring him (Afzal Khan) of his reality". In the words that follow we learn that this assurance had had its effect on the mind of the Bijapuri general. Here we shall pause a little.

Now the words "counselled him to pretend friendship" are capable of being put to very different interpretations. The word "pretend" has been explained in dictionaries as meaning not only "to make false appearance on representation" but also "to lay claim to", "to attempt" and "to strive after" something.\* We have to see in which sense this word has been used here, i. e., whether the letter purports to say that the Queen directed Afzal Khan to make a false appearance or representation of friendship to Sevaji or it merely suggests that she required the former to attempt to make friends with the latter.

Even if we do not make reference to context both suggestions should carry equal weight in our mind. The word "pretend" in the latter sense is more or less obsolete now. But it does not mean that in 17th century also it was not used in this sense. The 18th century Pretenders did not

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\*See Appendix A.

make any false appearance or representation but were genuine claimants of the British crown. Moreover the English factors were seldom cautious in their selection of words. A perusal of the English factory records would show that they often used improper and inaccurate ones. However, we shall answer the question with reference to context by analysing the ideas of the factors themselves.

If we construe the word "pretend" to signify Afzal Khan's being directed to make a false show of love toward Sevaji with the object of killing or capturing him, the description of the incident will become not only ambiguous but altogether meaningless. Sevaji's alleged knowledge of Afzal's intended treachery is incompatible with his sending his mother "as a hostage" to him. The two could not have been possibly believed by one and the same man. Had Revington meant to say that Sevaji resorted to treachery because he came to know that his opponent was planning the same against him, it would have been impossible for him to record his sending his mother "as a hostage" to the latter. His own idea of Sevaji's notion of Afzal Khan's state of mind would have never permitted him to believe that to be true. Secondly, had he meant to



depict treachery in the conduct of Afzal Khan a measure like this would have been described as a part of his doings and not as that of Sevaji's. In fact, the interpretation of Prof. Sarkar implies that the latter went so far as to deliberately take the risk of being entrapped in a Bijapuri snare which is at once unbelievable and inconsistent with the historians' idea of his character. The latter, with the mother of his enemy in his hand, could have very easily brought him to his knees. Revington cannot be supposed for a moment to have been so ill informed as to have regarded Sevaji so simple as to send his mother in hostage to an enemy whom he knew to be treacherous. That method could have been resorted only against an adversary reputed for simplicity, honesty and liability of being easily deceived. And as a man of only these qualities Afzal Khan seems to have been known to the Rajapur factors. These considerations when combined with the fact that in the letter itself neither it is specifically mentioned that the Queen counselled him to capture or kill Sevaji nor is he described making any such attempt, make it abundantly clear that Revington did not mean to say that Afzal Khan wanted to suppress Sevaji's rebellion by employing perfidious means.



The above remarks should be sufficient to show that the interpretation of Prof. Sarkar is partial and one-sided. It is rather surprising to note that the distinguished historian did not see that his meaning of the words in question would make the second sentence when read with the first not only ambiguous but also illogical.

If we substitute "attempt" or "strive after" for "pretend" we shall meet with no such difficulty. In this case the letter would be construed to mean that as the Queen thought her forces insufficient she advised Afzal Khan to suppress Sevaji's rebellion by trying to make friendship with him. As his purpose could be accomplished only by peaceful means it necessarily required him to repose confidence in his enemy which he did, but in doing which he acted rather carelessly and foolishly. Sevaji, somehow, came to know of the Queen's directions to Afzal Khan and to allay his suspicion, if there were any, he "dissembled his love toward him, and sent his mother as a hostage assuring him of his reality." Afzal Khan being thus satisfied about his sincerity advanced further, and the two armies came close to each

other. Then both of them with a party of their followers "went to meet and embrace each other." They began by discussing matters publicly, but later on "they desired to be private, when Sevaji with a dagger from out of his bosom stabbed the other to the heart." This is the simple and natural interpretation of Revington's letter. It is at once clear and consistent with the versions of other contemporaries like Carre, Fryer, and Manucci. In this case the direction of the Queen by its very nature would require Afzal Khan's placing confidence in Sevaji which we see here that the former did and which we know that the latter exploited very cunningly. Thus the Rajapur letter cannot be construed to mean that Sevaji outwitted his opponent despite the order of the Queen "to pretend friendship with his enemy", but that it was due to the same that he could accomplish his purpose so easily. Had Prof. Jadunath Sarkar consulted any dictionary about a rather uncommon use of this common word, he would have never thought that the Rajapur letter tended to mitigate the wickedness of Sevaji's crime on the ground that his victim was planning the same against him. Again, the learned historian did not take into consideration the whole of the letter at once but selected

merely those few words which seemed to lend countenance to his own view. Had he examined the whole of it or at least those lines which deal with Afzal Khan's murder more patiently and without exaggerating the importance of any particular words which seemed to give support to his own opinion, he might have come to the conclusion that the "absolutely contemporary and impartial English factory record" only corroborated the testimony of Khali Khan".

In vain he has attempted to interpret the Rajapur letter in Sevaji's favour. Mr. B. G. Paranjpe who is a member of the Poona School, and therefore a more ardent admirer of Sevaji, after devoting great time and energy to making selections of relevant historical passages from English factory records is sceptical of its worth. He says: "The first incident in Shivaji's life which is reported by the factors of Rajapur is the Afzal Khan incident. It is reported more than a month after the fatal day. There is no mention either of the exact date or of the place where the event occurred. Neither the incidents which led upto the crisis nor the important events which followed it are mentioned. No names of the other persons who took part in

the event are mentioned. The report that Shivaji sent his mother as a hostage to Afzal's camp is otherwise uncorroborated and obviously wrong. The report mentioned in No. 1 that the Queen at Bijapur advised Afzal to pretend friendship with Shivaji because a force of 10,000 was not deemed strong enough to overpower him is a wrong report as there is a farman recently discovered and printed which clearly states the command to Afzal by the Queen not only to capture Shivaji but to extirpate him (Sadhan Chikitsa, p. 287—88) All the deficiencies are supplied by the Jedhe chronology and Shiva Bharat\*."

"The recently discovered" firman to which Mr. Paranjpe is alluding does not throw any light on the matter in issue. As for the Jedhe chronology, Mr. Paranjpe does not seem to have to perused it carefully otherwise he would have never referred to it in this connection. And Shiva Bharat, even if its genuineness be admitted, being a poetical work, by its very nature is not entitled to be given preference to sources of unimpeachable authenticity and reliability in prose.

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\* É. F. R., Introduction, page 9.

## SABHASAD

Now for the apologists of Sevaji there remains only Sabhasad. The next thirteen pages contemplate only his story of Afzal Khan's death. All other accounts for the present are kept out of consideration. To avoid the possibility of confusion and to properly follow the line of our arguments it is very necessary that pages 8—23 of Dr. Sen's Siva Chhatrapati should be first minutely studied. For want of space it is not possible to reproduce them here.

We think it proper to state at the outset that after carefully reading the account of the incident as found in those pages we have come to the conclusion that Sabhasad in his original description did not paint treachery in the conduct Afzal Khan, and those sentences which suggest the same have been subsequently interpolated by some ardent apologist of the Marhatha chief. These are by no means difficult to be separated, for the interpolator, fortunately for us, possessed neither intelligence nor common sense, and it is still possible to remove his insertions. These have been made rather carelessly, and the result is that the account in its present form contains many flaws. The following

pages are expected to show that even if it be supposed that Sabhasad's is the only evidence on matters under consideration no allegation of perfidy can be substantiated against Afzal Khan whereas the same against Sevaji may be satisfactorily proved.

The said flaws can be made conspicuous by comparing those passages which relate to Afzal Khan's intentions with those which describe his conduct, i. e., by comparing the description of his designs with the description of their execution.

On page 10 of Dr. Sen's *Siva Chhatrapati* we are told of Afzal Khan's mind that "he (Sevaji) should be *captured alive* when his confidence had been inspired by the conclusion of a truce." On page 15, we are informed thus of the intention of the Khan as Pantaji Pant came to know of it as a result of the enquiry from the Khan's clerks and ministers : "They said,—Sivaji is a rogue. He cannot be captured by fighting. Therefore an interview should be arranged by diplomacy. The Khan has so contrived that he should be *captured* at the time of the interview." On page 16, Pantaji Pant is thus made to warn Sevaji against the

designs of Afzal : " There is evil intention in the Khan's mind. It is that he will bring you to an interview by a truce, *capture* you by treachery and then take you a prisoner to Bijapur."

It is only in these lines, and nowhere else, that we are told of Afzal Khan's mind. They inform us that his intention was to capture Sevaji alive, and do not suggest that he intended to put him to death. But his conduct offers a striking contrast to the aim ascribed to him. First, he consents to meet his adversary with two men, the same number being on the side of the latter also. Besides the fact that the situation was a creation of Sevaji himself and not that of his victim, we have to note that no three men in the world when placed in similar circumstances can expect to bind the same number. It was a physical impossibility. We cannot concede for a moment that Afzal Khan could have intended to accomplish such a purpose in a parley of this kind.

Moreover, what Afzal is represented to have done was to strike Sevaji with his Jamdhar, which offence, however more provoking, should not have been committed in pursuance of the scheme of capturing. We are not concerned with the repugnance or otherwise of any particular acts but the mental condition



of the writer who describes them. In the beginning of the account we are definitely told of Afzal Khan's intention to capture Sevaji alive. But towards the close, *without being informed of his abandoning his original idea* suddenly we find him attacking the latter with his jamdhar instead of making an attempt to take him prisoner.

This inconsistency of his conduct with aim is inexplicable. No historical account contains such a glaring flaw between the intention and action of the same individual. The inference is irresistible that all those passages which suggest that he intended to capture Sevaji alive and then attacked him with his jamdhar have been subsequently interpolated.

The description of Afzal Khan's conduct at the interview is surrounded by the air of unreality. "The Khan stood up", it is said "and met the Raje advancing a little. As the Raje embraced him, the Khan caught his head tightly (in an embrace) in his armpit and unsheathed the Jamdad he had in his hand and struck at the side of the Raje. The weapon slid over the steel armour the Raje had on, (and) did not reach the body".\* The first thing to be noted here is that no other contemporary writer, excluding

\* Sen's Siva Chhatrapati, page 21.



neither the English factors nor the Jedhe clerks, has recorded that Afzal Khan also attacked Sevaji. Therefore on this point the evidence of Sabhasad—if it be his at all—remains uncorroborated. Then, there being inconsistency of such a glaring nature as has been noted above between Afzal's designs and their execution, we are constrained to think, that these words have been subsequently inserted, and Sabhasad's own words removed. And even if we go so far as to accept them as genuine a close scrutiny of the description of his conduct will prove it beyond doubt that he could have never acted in the manner he is represented here. Thus in either case he will be clearly acquitted of the charge of treachery.

In the first place it is inconceivable that Afzal Khan should have even thought of attacking Sevaji in those circumstances. The fact of the latter's embracing the former is clearly mentioned. When this happened the body of the one must have necessarily come into contact with that of the other, and then Afzal Khan, despite his being originally ignorant of Sevaji's wearing a steel armour under the tunic, must have come to know of it after feeling its hardness. Further, he must have been warned,

in case of his having any evil intention, that it was useless to strike his enemy in that circumstance, because the object of his attack would be a steel armour and not a human body. It is to be noted that from the account of Sabhasad it does not appear that Afzal Khan had unsheathed his Jamdhar before the embrace had taken place. It is, therefore, not possible to argue that he struck the blow on his enemy in the moment of hurry and nervousness before realizing the futility of his intended attack.

Even in this interpolated account of Sabhasad there is much in the conduct of Afzal Khan which makes it extremely improbable that he should have ever cherished any deceitful motive against Sevaji. He is said to have "committed sacrilage on the gods", especially of having ordered the stone image of Bhawani of Tuljapur to be broken and pounded down into a handmill. Such a measure could have never emanated from him had he started from his place with the fixed purpose of gaining his end by diplomacy and treachery. These deeds could show their result in no other way than by alienating the sympathies of his adversary further and strengthening his hatred and distrust still more. And the most funny thing about the affair is that

it is at his very next halthing place, Wai, that he is said to have made the decision of capturing Sevaji. Again, we find Afzal Khan so trustful and so indulgent that one who is himself determined on achieving his purpose by treachery can never afford to be. Those who plan perfidy must necessarily apprehend that the same might have been planned against them by the other party also. This is why Sevaji took such elaborate precautions and Afzal Khan none. Does it not prove the honesty of his motive that he agreed to advance in the country of his enemy without any misgiving, at a mere suggestion of the latter's envoy dismissed his whole contingent exposing himself to the impending danger, and, when further induced in flattering words, removed from his side even Saiyid Banda, the last man who could have been of any help to him in the hour of peril? When he went to the interview he took no precaution for the safety of his person. The fact that his followers were taken unawares after his death shows clearly that they also were ignorant of the alleged plot against Sevaji. And yet it is from them that we are told that Pantaji had learnt Afzal Khan's designs. They ought to have kept themselves ready for leading an attack or at least for defending themselves. Lastly the

conduct of the two retainers who had followed him to the interview suggest the same. From their attitude also it does not appear that they knew anything of Afzal Khan's alleged intentions. That general should have taken them at least in his confidence. Though jamdhar is not the best weapon for attacking an enemy, they did not raise their little finger to assist their master and remained indifferent to what was taking place, for neither the scorpion-like dagger nor the tiger-claws could have been seen by them, until Sevaji, after swiftly accomplishing his purpose, jumped from the platform and ran to his own men.

On the other hand, if we examine the conduct of Sevaji it leaves no doubt in our mind that what he did was not an act of self-defence, but a premeditated treacherous murder. The conduct of Afzal Khan has already been considered to show that nothing but simplicity, innocence, and weakness of being easily deceived will be presumed about him. But against Sevaji the charge of treachery is amply proved. In the first place we have to note the flattering messages he sent to his enemy. "There is no evil intention in my mind" he says unnecessarily. He calls himself a timid person while about the other he says : "It will signify his greatness if the Khan will take me by the hand,

restore my confidence by words of hope and secure my welfare by conducting me to the presence of the Badshah". He addresses Afzal Khan, as his "superior", as his "guardian" and as his "uncle".\* How carefully was he spinning the cobweb of intrigue in which his unwary opponent was at last entangled?

On page 12 of the same work we read Sevaji's instructions to Nitaji Palkar. "I shall invite Afzal Khan to Jawli, meet him by offering to make peace and draw him near by inspiring his confidence. You should then come to Ghatmatha and block the roads." These instructions were given at a time when neither the envoy of Afzal Khan had visited him nor had Pantaji Pant "learnt by a liberal use of bribes" that Afzal Khan's officers were convinced that "he had so arranged matters that Shiva should be arrested at the interview, as he was too cunning to be caught by open fight". The above instructions should be sufficient to prove that Sevaji was determined to kill his opponent by treachery and that he decided to do so not because he came to know that the latter was cherishing perfidious designs against him. The crime was committed in pursuance of his own

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\* Sen's Siva Chhatrapati, pp. 13, 16, 17 and 21.

scheme and should be judged independently and irrespective of what his victim might have intended at his own place. This fact alone—not to speak of others which are many and which create very strong presumption against him—is sufficient to prove that what he did was not an act of self-defence but a premeditated treacherous murder. Again, on page 13 Sevaji tells Pantaji : “If he asks for your oaths give them, make no hesitation. Anyhow bring the Khan to Jawle. Besides, you are to institute an enquiry in his army by some device and get information by whatever means it can be obtained”. Why should Sevaji be so impatient about Afzal Khan’s coming to Jawle ? Why should he direct his envoy to bring him anyhow to the above-mentioned place ? He was even instructed to give oaths of his honesty without any hesitation. Afzal Khan is nowhere in hurry about the meeting. But Sevaji is. Why ? The above sentences clearly prove that the suggestion of the fatal interview had proceeded from Sevaji and not from Afzal, and the instructions of the latter to Krishnaji Bhaskar mentioned at page 10 have been subsequently interpolated.

Sir Jadunath Sarkar has attached peculiar importance to the question of who struck the

first blow. Perhaps he wants to impress upon his readers that Sevaji would not have attacked his invited guest if the latter had not attacked him first. But the deliberate preparations he had made, the elaborate precautions he had taken before going for the interview, and various other circumstances prove it conclusively that he was determined to attack irrespective of what Afzal Khan might have chosen to do. We are told that in his left hand was concealed a set of steel claws (*bagh-nakkh*) fastened to the finger by a pair of rings, and up his right sleeve lay hidden a thin sharp dagger called the scorpion (*bichwa*). Let us pause here for a moment.

Now according to Prof. Sarkar, Sevaji attacked Afzal Khan because the latter had already attacked him. But what could he have done in case of Afzal's electing not to attack him. Notwithstanding the interpolations we are nowhere told that Sevaji knew it definitely that Afzal Khan was determined to attack him at the very first meeting. He is said to have anticipated treachery but not necessarily at the very first interview. The question is : could he have concealed his two weapons especially the tiger claws for more than a minute or two? One cannot excuse himself from performing the



functions of ordinary social intercourse by keeping his hands closed infinitely without at the same time exciting the suspicion of others. Had Sevaji not disposed off his opponent in the very beginning he would have been placed in a very delicate situation. And he must have foreseen it when he started for the interview. Secondly, it was possible for Afzal Khan to attack Sevaji with his sword at any moment of their meeting. But the latter could have used his (*bagh-nakh*) and (*bichhwa*) only at the time of the customary embracing with which all social functions used to begin in those days. Thus it is clear that Sevaji had gone to the interview fully determined at his place to attack his enemy at the time he did, in every circumstance and at all costs irrespective of the attitude of his victim. It matters little, therefore, whether or not Afzal Khan also struck a blow: the attack of Sevaji was not to be conditional upon that.

Besides what has already been said, we have some additional proof of the fact that Sabhasad himself regarded the incident as a treacherous murder. Whenever he alludes to it—and he does so more than once—he characterises the deed as treachery and not as treachery recoiled. For instance Abul Hasan Tanashah at



the time of Sevaji's visit to Hyderabad is thus made to speak of him. "He said it is not desirable to have an interview with the King (Sevaji). He *treacherously killed* Afzal Khan, defeated Shayasta Khan, went to Delhi and exhibited his valour to the Emperor Alamgir.\* While describing Sevaji's appearance in the Mughal court he imputes apprehensions of the same nature to Aurangzeb in the following words: "He also caused about 2000 brave men to stand round about the throne apprehending that Shivaji might jump on to it and by the same *treacherous trick as that with which he had destroyed Afzal Khan* at an interview as he was not an ordinary human being but a devil." The old historian referred to the incident not only as a treacherous murder but was also proud of its being so and spoke of its astonishing effect on the mind of the Muslims sovereigns with apparent jubilation.

Now we will summarise our opinions on the nature and value of Sabhasad's evidence. In the first place, his account of the incident has deplorably suffered from interpolations made with a view to throw mask on Sevaji's crime. But these

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\* S. B. M. V., I. page 125.

† S. B. M. V., I., page 106.

can be easily detected and removed for they have been introduced rather carelessly and the flaws that have been left are irreconcilable. It is by itself a separate theme and we have not dealt with it exhaustively. Nor have we made attempt to point out each and every interpolation as such. Even then the variance between Afzal Khan's alleged designs and their execution and some other flaws of a like nature to which we have referred above abundantly prove that the passages describing them have been subsequently interpolated by some person other than the author himself. Secondly, after these spurious insertions have been removed the residue will be a clear, consistent, and rational account of the incident, which will neither allow Dr. Sen to complain of its obscurity, nor will which contain the slightest hint to Afzal Khan's perfidy, but will describe the treachery of Sevaji alone. Thirdly, even on the basis of the account as we find it to-day, no charge of treachery can be satisfactorily established against Afzal Khan, whereas the same against Sevaji may be amply proved.

#### OTHER WRITERS.

Now we come to that class of contemporary writers whose accounts without making the slightest hint to any evil intention on the part

of Afzal Khan condemn Sevaji alone for treachery. Unlike Sabhasad who wrote more than thirty years after the incident, some of them prepared their accounts when Sevaji was still alive. They include among them Abbe Carre, Francois Valentine, Fryer, Manucci and Jedhe Clerks. They agree with one another in accusing Sevaji for murdering Afzal Khan perfidiously and in not recording anything in the latter's conduct which may be construed as a plot for killing or capturing the former. No doubt in regard to minute and unimportant details they differ with one another. But these differences should not be magnified disproportionately. They only augment the value of their testimony by showing that they did not derive their informations for one common source, and are, therefore, capable of corroborating each other.

#### ABBE CARRE.

The French traveller Abbe Carre visited the western coast of India only a few years after the incident. He went to Bijapur also in 1672—73 where he found a large number of workmen engaged in cutting stones to be "used in the mausoleum of Afzal Khan". According to Dr. Sen as said above, he was an impartial eye-witness

and an enthusiastic admirer of Sevaji. He disliked Afzal Khan for his rumoured murder of his some 200 women. After condemning that deed he goes on to speak of the incident in the following words :

"... This was the reason why Sivagy gave his ears to the discourse of some of his generals who advised him to assassinate Abdel Khan on the pretext of an interview . . . They pressed forward their arguments to palliate this crime. Sevagy yielded to their discourse besides having once by the worst of all crimes revolted against his lawful king, murder was a thing he was not to be frightened by . . .

"Sevagy sent a herald to propose to Abdel Khan that he should advance alone at the head of his army to confer with Sevagy, who would do as much on his part ; for greater security he even offered to abandon his arms provided that Abdel Khan should be pleased to cast away his.

"Abdel Khan accepted the offer and by an egregious indiscrimination advanced alone . . . .

"Sevagy, however, had a dagger concealed in his vest, and he was firmly resolved to use it and thereby finish a war which would otherwise

have lasted long, and the success of which was doubtful.

"When they came quite close to each other, Sevagy began the conversation; and as if he thought only of winning him over to his rebellion . . . then changing his demeanour all of a sudden he drew out his dagger and stabbed him on the chest".\*

FRANCOIS VALENTINE.

Froncois Valentine in his *Description of Suratte and the Lives of the greate Mogols* refers to the incident in the following words :

"Sivaji, however, always caused trouble, wherefore the King of Visiapore (Bijapur) attacked him with an army under Abdul Khan, whom, however, Sivaji very cunningly *deceived and treacherously murdered*, at the same time getting possession of the strong city of Pangola."†

DR. FRYER.

Principal H. G. Rawlinson in his *Shivaji the Maratha* speaks thus of Fryer's account: "There are many accounts of the death of Afzal Khan, but none more picturesque than that of Fryer who

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\* F. B. S., page 226.

† F. B. S., page 358.

was in India at the time". He thinks Fryer got his information from some one on the spot. Writes Fryer :

"At the day prefixed, therefore, he (Afzal Khan) takes with him his son and a selected number which he credited would not be out-equalled by Sevaji, upon his former protestations and hopes of reconciliation ; but the perfidious man (Sevaji) had placed an ambuscado and with a smaller shew in appearance than Abdul brought, waits his coming ; who as soon as he spied him afar off, sent forth to meet him and prostrates himself before him (Afzal Khan) with feigned tears craving pardon for his offence, and would not rise till he had assured him of his being his advocate to procure it. Going to enter the choultry together he cries out, like a fearful man, that his lord (so he styled the General) might execute his pleasure on him and ease him of his life ; which Abdul Khan surmising was because he was armed and the other came seemingly unarmed, delivered his sword and ponyard to his page, and bade him enter with courage ; whereafter some parley he slips a stiletto from under his coat sleeve, and after eying his blow, struck it at his heart, where-at the signal was given and his men came forth, in which scuffle Abdul's son



gave Sevagi a wound but was forced to charge habit with frass immediately, and venturing through untrodden paths hardly escaped to the camp, who thereupon were so discomfited, that they quickly dispersed themselves and left the field open to Sevagi."\*

#### MANUCCI.

Nicholas Manucci spent nearly the whole of his life in India. In the company of Jai Singh he saw Sevaji in 1666. In his *Storie Do Mogor* he never conceals his dislike of Muhammadans in general and that of Aurangzeb in particular. But, as far as Marhathas are concerned he always sympathizes with them. There was no reason for him to be unduly partial to Afzal Khan. He relates the incident in the following words:—

" . . . . So that the king of Bijapur . . . . . determined to send against him a famous general Afzal Can (Khan). This man pursued Shivaji so persistently that he was forced to take refuge in the mountains. Finding himself powerless for further resistance, he resorted to a trick. Writing to Afzal Khan a letter, in which he made excuses, confessed himself a criminal and culprit, and

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\* S. B. M., pages 224—5. See also Fryer's New Account, page 172.



asked the general to intercede for him. He besought pardon from the king.

"Afzal Khan replied that he might come in without any hesitation, that he would obtain his pardon from the king and would be always his protector . . . . . In any case, however, he (Sevaji) could not resist long, the king being so much the more powerful.

"Shivaji consented to appear before Afzal Khan, but begged him to come with only 5 persons to a spot at a distance from the camp while on his side he (Sevaji) would bring no more than five men. He would fall at his feet and throw himself upon his mercy. Delighted at finding that Shivaji meant to give himself up Afzal Khan accepted his proposals . . . . . Shivaji got ready with a small and very sharp lancet, which at the top was formed into the shape of a ring with a projecting stone. Pushing a finger into the ring, the lancet was concealed under cover of the hand . . . . . all five men with their leader Shivaji wore coats of mail beneath their clothes. This precaution was not adopted by Afzal Khan and his five men. Nor did they suspect the treachery about to be practised upon them . . . . Then Shiva appeared with his five men, all on horse back. At some distance from

the tent they descended from their horses. Shivaji began to advance bowing again and again as if he was petitioning for a good reception and was in a state of apprehension. Afzal Khan beckoned to him with his hands that he might appear without fear; and as Shivaji drew near, Afzal Khan raised his arm as if to embrace him. Shivaji's hands came round him lower down, Afzal Khan being a tall man and very corpulent; then swiftly and forcibly he rent open Afzal Khan's side abdomen from the left to the right so that the bowels protruded. The other five men laid hold of their swords and cut to pieces Afzal Khan's companions."\*

It will be noted that though differing in details Manucci substantially agrees with those who accuse Sevaji for treacherously murdering Afzal Khan, and materially corroborates Carre, Fryer, and Valentine.

#### JEDHE CHRONOLOGY.

The Jedhes of Bhor joined Sevaji against Afzal Khan. They have described the incident in their chronology, Shakhavali as well as Kareena. No historian seems to have given due

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\* Manucci's *Storia Do Mogor*, Vol. 2, page 27.

weight to their evidence. They, at least, cannot be supposed to have been partial to the Bijapuri general. But even in their account there is nothing to suggest treachery on his part : while on their sole testimony the same is amply proved against Sevaji. They record in the Shakha-vali :

“ 1 Vaishakh (12th April to 11th May 1659). A Firman came from the Adil Shah to the desh-mukhs of the Mawal to join Afzal Khan . . .

“ . . . Then Shivaji sent Pantaji Gopinath as envoy to Afzal Khan and arranged a visit at the foot of Pratapgad.”

“Kartik (12th October to 11th November 1659) Afzal Khan sent his envoy Krishna Rao to Shivaji at Pratapgad. Shivaji presented him with a dress of honour and sent him back after fixing up a visit at the foot of Pratapgad. Then Shivaji held a private consultation with his ministers and Kanhoji Jedhe. “The Mussalman is treacherous. Bundal’s forces should remain concealed at Jawli and the jungles of Par. If he perpetrates some treachery at our meeting, his army which is stationed at Par should not be allowed to ascend the hill, and succour should be brought to me with some select men. If per chance by the grace

of the goddess Amba, Afzal Khan meets death, signals will be fired from the fort ; you should then attack Par and annihilate the army. Haibat Rao and Balaji Naik Slimkar have been stationed at the Bodha Gholi Pass with their men ; they will not allow the enemy to ascend by that Pass." Thus they consulted and dispositions were made accordingly.

"Margashirsh Shuddha 7, Thursday, (10th November 1659) Afzal Khan came to the ridge of Pratapgarh in a palanquin, together with envoys and retainers, for the interview. Shivaji came down from the fort to meet. At the meeting Shivaji caught Afzal Khan sidewise and killed him . . . "■

Here we are neither told of any counsel that the Queen might have given to Afzal Khan to which the factors of Rajapur refer, nor do we find Afzal Khan himself hatching any plots of treachery against Sevaji prior to their meeting, much less attacking him at the time of the interview which Sabhasad's account in its present form describes. It is only Sevaji who makes preparation for ensnaring his victim, and at last succeeds in disposing him of. True, the Mussalman

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\*S. B. M. p. 30. See also Shivaji Souvenir.

is called treacherous, but there is nothing in the Mussalman's conduct to suggest treachery. The proposal of the fatal interview proceeds from Sevaji himself, which taking place, he "caught Afzal Khan sidewise and killed him" without his opponent raising his hand.

#### JEDHE KAREENA

The incident is described in the Kareena with irrelevant details. We deem it, therefore, necessary to reproduce only those lines which describe the meeting :

"A grand structure was erected at the foot of the Pratapgad fort, where Afzal Khan came to visit Shivaji, in the month of the Kartika of the Vikari year 1581, in a palanquin with his envoys and attendants. Shivaji had already selected his men for various duties and stationed them in different places. On the day of the meeting, he came to visit the Khan with his own envoy and attendants in charge of various functions. During this meeting, Afzal Khan caught hold of Shivaji's neck under his arm, when Shivaji armed as he was with steel claws on his fingers, [Waghnakh, i. e. tiger claws] thrust them into his body and burst open his entrails. On getting his neck released, Shivaji took his sword in his hand at

which the Khan's attendants put him into the palanquin and began to run."\*

A word of explanation is needed here. Afzal Khan's catching "hold of Shivaji's neck under his arm" should not be interpreted so as to impute any sinister motive to him. It might not have meant anything more than customary embracing. We are not in a position to say anything about the correctness or otherwise of the translation. Prof. Jadunath Sarkar says it is uncorrected. But Marhatha writers being not familiar with Muhammadan manners were very apt to mistake the import of embracing. Sabhasad also, while describing the meeting of Sevaji and Diler Khan, similarly betrays his ignorance of Muhammadan social etiquette. In any case, Afzal Khan's merely catching hold of Sevaji's neck would not have relieved the latter of his ghost.

#### BHIMSEN BURHANPURI

This Hindu writer of *Nuskh-i-Dilkusha* relates the incident in the following words :

"The Sultan of Bijapur on hearing (of Shivaji's rebellion) sent a strong force under a high grandee of his court named Afzal Khan to fight and put down Shiva. But Shiva very cunningly

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\*Shivaji Souvenir, p. 56.

professed weakness and humility and wrote to the Khan, begging pardon for his offences and the Khan's intercession and requesting him to come towards Jaoli to compose his frightened heart, saying that he was not really refractory. The Khan, proud of his large force and careless of the enemy's deceit, came to the hilly region of Jaoli suspecting no tumult, and encamped there. It was mutually agreed that at some spot in Jaoli, a tent should be set up, and the Khan with ten men and Shiva with 5 or 6 should meet there. As promised (they) came to the tent. At the time of embracing, Shiva dealt some blows on the stomach of the Khan with the weapon called by the Deccanis *baghnakh* (tiger's claws) and also *bichwa* (scorpion), which he had in his hand, so that he was disembowelled."\*

#### 91 QALMI BAKHAR

Those portions of 91 Qalmi Bakhar which deal with Afzal Khan's death are not available to those who are not conversant with Marhathi. Mr. Putwardhan has published extracts from this bakhar in the Source Book of Maratha History, Vol. I. But he was not included those passages which are relevant to the issue of Afzal Khan's

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\*See the Modern Review, May, 1907.



murder. However, on page 62 of the same work, he excepts it when he asserts that all "authorities on Maratha side . . . declare that Afzal Khan struck the first blow."

As said above, according to Prof. Jadunath Sarkar, it is the same work as the Raigarh Life of Shivaji. The English translation of the latter is published in Forrest's Selections from the letters, etc., in the Bombay Secretariat, Maratha Series, Vol. I, pages 1 to 22, 1885. It gives the account of Afzal Khan's death and the events which preceded it in great detail. For want of space it is not reproduced here. The inquisitive reader may see it there. In that long, but simple and to a certain extent natural, account of the incident, coming from the pen of a Hindu writer, there is nothing to suggest perfidy in the conduct of the victim of Sevaji's treacherous cruelty. We are nowhere told that Afzal Khan was "counselled" by the Queen or anybody else at Bijapur "to pretend friendship with his enemy", or of Krishnaji Bhaskhar's hinting to Sevaji that the Khan seemed to harbour some plan of mischief, or of Pantaji's learning by a liberal use of bribes that "Afzal's officers were convinced that he had so arranged matters that Shiva would be arrested at the interview, as he

was too cunning to be caught by open fight", and last of all of Afzal Khan's drawing his sword on Sevaji. On the other hand the conduct of the latter is full of treachery and deceitfulness.

It is a thankless task to collect at one place the versions of as many as ten writers, all of them speaking about the same incident. But it must be admitted that it has been purposely done. Nowadays it is often said that it was Khafi Khan who for the first time charged Sevaji with treachery. The above extracts should remove all doubts about the matter, proving it satisfactorily that no contemporary ever referred to the incident without at the same time fixing treachery upon the head of Sevaji alone. This is true of the Marhathi writers as much as of the Muhammadan historians. Though the former refrain from calling him treacherous yet they describe his treachery nearly as faithfully as the latter.

Prof. Jadunath Sarkar referring merely to the Alamgirnamah, Dilkusha, Khafi Khan and Tarikh-i-Shivaji, observed in the "Modern Review" of May, 1907 : "The death of Afzal Khan must remain one of the puzzles of Indian History as long as new contemporary evidence does not spring to light". It is indeed surprising that it should have been ever a puzzle to him. But it is

really amazing that he clings to his old view in spite of the fact that much "new contemporary evidence" in the shape of the versions of Fryer, A. Carre, Valentine, Man nucci, the Rajapur letter, the Jedhe Shakavali, and the Jedhe Kareena has sprung to light since then. May we now expect that he will publicly admit that it is no longer a 'puzzle'.

Now we want to refer to the views of two very eminent scholars of Maharashtra, Mr. Justice Ranade, the founder of the Marhatha School, and the late Lokmaniya Tilak. Ranade's opinion about Sevaji's crime is substantially the same as that of Grant Duff who charged him with treacherous murder. It is surprising, indeed, that Ranade who raised the standard of revolt against Duff should agree with him on this controversial point. He has naturally avoided the condemnatory expressions about his hero, but his admission of the guilt is clear beyond doubt. Still more noteworthy are the views of Tilak. His interpretation of the deed has attracted the attention of more English writers than one. "How Shivaji was guilty of treacherous murder in killing his Muhammedan foe, Afzal Khan" observed Sir Valentine Chirol "is perhaps a debatable point of history, but instead of disputing that it was murder, Tilak

praised the deed and justified it on religious grounds, as the Divine Krishna tells us in the Baghawatghita that we may kill even our teachers and our kinsmen and no blame attaches if we are not actuated by selfish desires. This was at a great Shivaji festival at Raigarh over which Tilak himself presided to commemorate the Mahratha chief's coronation after he had destroyed both Afzal Khan and the whole of his Muhammadan army. Another Brahman pointed the moral by declaring that "every Hindu, every Mahratha, must rejoice at the spectacle, for we too are all striving to regain our lost independence." Mr. Dodwell is an other English writer who sees a political motive in Tilak's "disregarding" the "usual Maratha defence that the Muslim began first" and in his declaring "Shivaji justified even if he had planned the murder beforehand" It is beyond the purview of this book to determine whether or not was there any political motive also behind Tilak's interpretation. But one thing is certain: the editor of the *Jedhe Shakavali* could not have justified the deed at least on this ground that Sevaji's victim also was planning the same against him.

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## CHAPTER V

## THE REAL SEVAJI

It is not possible to give in this little book a biographical account of Sevaji's doings by describing the different events which constitute his political career. For that purpose Sarkar's invaluable work is recommended. Nor do we propose to consider even all the features of his character. With some other matters we shall deal with such of them only as have been altogether ignored or insufficiently studied and improperly represented. In regard to these the views of the historians of Calcutta and Maharashtra, particularly of the latter, are so thickly coloured that truth has been obscured. Our opinions are based on solid facts and may not be rejected simply because they are at variance with the views of those whose reputation is established.

In deference to the popular prejudices, and for the sake of convenience and brevity, we have decided to express our views only in the words of Sevaji's contemporaries by making quotations from them, confining ourself to merely supplying the connecting links.

## HIS NAME

Though Sevaji has been engaging the attention of the historians of Maharashtra for the last

more than sixty years, strange to say, no one ever cared to ascertain his true name. His contemporaries pronounced it variously. Their modes of spelling it are no less than ten. In case of the Dutch writers the confusion is so great that he is called not only Sivasi but also Suasy. Those who can be reasonably supposed to have known it correctly called him either Sevaji or Sivaji. However, as in the contemporary records the *S* is more commonly followed the *e* than by the *i* we have preferred to call him Sevaji. But the one significant fact is that the *S* is nowhere followed by the *h*. Even Sabhasad Called him Siva Chhatrapati. Not that there is no word *Seva* in Marhathi or Sanskrit. Only to give his name more orthodox form and colour and a politico-religious import, he is now being called Shivaji after the god of destruction, Shiva. It was reserved for the late Mr Justice Ranade, who has said so many new things in Marhatha history, to rechristen Sevaji about two centuries after his death. Others have only followed him

#### HIS ANCESTRY

A perusal of the contemporary records will show that it was almost universally believed that there was something wrong with Sevaji's lineage. According to Cosme da Guarda, to use the words of



Dr. Sen, "Shivaji, though popularly known as the youngest of Shahji's twelve sons was really the offspring of an illicit relation between Jija Bai (Sevaji's mother) and Dom Manoel de Menezes, a Portuguese gentleman of Virar near Bessien".\* Manucci informs us that Sevaji "was the bastard son of a Hindu King of whom I spoke ..... His mother was the daughter of a carpenter. When this bastard had grown up he claimed the crown upon the death of his father; although he had a brother who was legitimate."† The story of Khafi Khan being too well known, and for other reasons, need not be repeated here. According to the Hindu writer, Bhim Sen Burhanpuri, Sevaji descended from Bagh Singh, an illegitimate son of the Rana of Udaipur, Bhim Singh "by a concubine of a tribe very inferior to his own". ‡ Sabhasad's making Aurangzeb and Afzal Khan and his followers call Sevaji "*haramjada*" \*\* (bastard) lends countenance to the same view.

In our opinion these rumours \*† did not owe their origin to any real flaw in Sevaji's descent

\* See Sen's Administrative System of the Marathas, page 13

† Storia do Mogor, Vol. II, page 26.

‡ S. B. M., page 157.

\*\* Sen's Siva Chhatrapati, pages 15 and 82.

\*† Khafi Khan, it will be noted, was not the only historian, as it is often supposed, who found flaw in Sevaji's descent.



and that their existence was due partly to treachery, duplicity, and meanness evinced throughout his conduct and partly to the universal misery and suffering that he inflicted upon his neighbours. The people of our country being naturally simple, honest, and kind-hearted are very prone to think that these vices can be found only in those whose descent is not free from contamination.

#### HIS TREACHERY AND MEANNESS.

Meanness coupled with treachery seems to have been the most salient feature of Sevaji's character. To gain his end he could go down the lowest depth of immorality. For instance, although he subsequently behaved most dishonourably toward the King of Golkonda, when his interest had made him an ally of that monarch, he, as said above, went so far as to call him "his father, his lord and his sovereign".\* Similarly while negotiating with Jai Singh he said that he regarded the Mirza Raja (Jai Singh) "as his father" and solicited his paternal mediation and intercession to "obtain forgiveness and pardon for the crimes he had been guilty of".† In the same way while planning treachery of

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\* F. B. S., page 277.

† S. B. M., page 160.

a most abominable nature against Afzal Khan, to allay his suspicion, he described him as his "guardian", his uncle and "as is the Maharaja (Shahji) so is the Khan to me."\* Most of his acquisitions were made treacherously. It was so that he acquired Supa, Purandhar, and Jawle. More than any thing else, he attempted to capture treacherously even Vyankoji,† despite his own most solemn oaths and affirmations. But the latter being his own brother outwitted him. In short, beginning from his occupation of Torna in 1646 right down to April 1679, some months before his death, when he failed in the greatest enterprise of his life, i.e. in his attempt of capturing Bijapur by perfidy, his career appears to have been an invariable record of duplicity, treachery and meanness.

His plans were generally succesful in the beginning. But later on, when he became notorious, people became careful in not reposing trust in his words. "Sevaji" wrote Bombay to the Company on 26th November, 1675, 'keeps a very fair correspondence with us, but is not to be trusted, he totally governing himself by his interest alone, not valuing

\*Sen's Siva Chhatrapati, page 20.

†F. B. S., page 303 and History of Madura Nayaks, page 281.

the breach of any oath or promise where he can imagine to be a gainer thereby, but he hath many irons in the fire which will find him employ a considerable time, so have little reason to fear any disturbance from him."\* The same factory wrote to Surat on 14th October 1676, "We do not trust Sevaji with any goods or money, nor have any dealings with his ministers; well finding how faithless they are."† The reply of Surat to the Company on being required by the latter to open correspondence with Sevaji is more expressive. "You recommend" they write "a fair correspondence with him (Sevaji); but we know not what league to hold with a rebel and perfidious theif, but desire to keep our distance and have nothing to do with him."‡ On the same subject the same factory had written to the Company: "We have no other assurance than the word of a Thief or a Rebel"\*\*\* In the same way, Bombay being required by Surat to send some soldiers wrote on 29th March, 1670 "We can ill-spare so many men having Sevaji, (a friend to none) so near a neighbour to us."\*† Taylor had already written

\* E. F. R., Vol. II, page 74.

† E. F. R., Vol. II, page 100.

‡ E. F. R., Vol. I, page 116.

\*\* E. F. R., Vol. I, page 65.

\*† E. F. R., Vol I, page 143.

from Rajapur to Surat about Sevaji and his men that they were "the veriest roughts in the world and have no regard for oath or promises so solemnly made."\* Nothing can be more expressive than the observations of the Surat Council recorded on the 17th October, 1676, while contemplating the dissolution of the Rajapur factory: "So long as that pirate and universal robber (Sevaji) lives, that hath no regard to friend nor foe, God nor man, there can be no safety in any trade in his country."† Sevaji's cruelties at Surat are very well known, but the faithlessness and treachery that he exhibited at that port have, perhaps, no parallel in the history of man's perfidy. "Whoever he was that was taken and brought before him" (Sevaji), wrote Surat on the 28th January, 1664, to the Company about his atrocities; "could not redeem himself lost either his hands or his head; and his manner was first to plunder and then to call the owner of his house to give something over and above to redeem his house from being burnt, yet the perfidious villain would fire it

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\* E. F. R., Vol. I, page 48.

† E. F. R., Vol. II, page 101.

afterwards, though he had obliged himself to the contrary.”\*

In spite of their vigilance the servants of the Company suffered at his hands more than once. First of all, without any justification he plundered the Rajapur factory, and in the hope of money imprisoned the factors. This was followed by long and protracted negotiations for indemnifying the Company. Then, “. . . there is no probability of security from such a heathen who while we were in treaty with him for satisfaction for our losses at Rajapur gives orders for the robbing our factory at Hubli . . .”† In the same way, while at peace with the English, the Marhathas plundered the factory of the Company at Dharangaon. The attitude that Sevaji adopted and the pleas that he put forward in his defence when pressed by the Company to compensate their loss, on account of their hollowness, falsity, and unreason should make every admirer of Sevaji blush.‡

No one ever trusted Sevaji without being subsequently deceived. The kind of reception he

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\* E. F. R., Vol. I, page 68.

† E. F. R., Vol. I, page 274.

‡ E. F. R., Vol. II., page 70. Austin recorded in the “Narrative” of his first visit to Sevaji :

accorded to the embassy of the Dutch during his Karnatic campaign furnishes a typical example. Says Martin :

"This kind of embassy of the Dutch had not all the success that they expected from it. They were well received by Sevaji just as their presents, but afterwards a sum of 25 to 30 thousand was demanded of them on the sole pretext that it was needed, the envoys excused themselves and replied that it was necessary to write to their masters. They were detained in the

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"September the 6th. On the 6th of September we gained the high and difficult top of Rairy hill, which impartially may boast of either, and fortunately had audience the next day of Sevajee and Sambhaji Raja, etc., principal officers, who being burthened with shame at my complaints a politic slumber encircled his brow, and seemingly hung thereon until I had finished, and then he pleaded ignorance to the fact and totally denied the reception of any effect whatsoever, and so desired time for his most serious consideration.

September 15th. After audience had Perlad Pandit our procutor was not idle in this affair, but with much courage and vigour stirred up the Raja to give us a speedy and effectual answer which could not be obtained until the 15th of September when at the same place as formerly he expressed his mind in few words, to wit that in respect he had not account given them by his general of any effect taken from us more than some plate (which belonged to Samuel Austin). He thought our demands very unreasonable, and in respect our Factory was not so well fortified as even to oppose the impene-

camp for 2 or 3 months to their great expense, and they only extricated themselves by several thousand of pagodas which they had to give, (but) of which the ministers had the best part".\*

Such was Sevaji's notion of international obligations. No wonder that in the eye of his contemporaries he always remained base and low. His ambassadors were not shown the same respect and consideration to which the representatives of all civilized governments are entitled. The treatment meted out to his envoy at Goa by the Portuguese Viceroy when he attempted to surprise that port is an excellent illustration. "The Vice-King a little before than his death" reported the English factors of Karwar to Surat "searching narrowly through all his towns found four or five hundred men of Sevaji's had (hid) up and down in several places; upon which he sent for Sevaji's ambassador

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force, he had no reason to satisfy us for that which vagabonds and scouts committed without order or knowledge of the General; to which I answered it was done by his General's knowledge, otherwise he would not have carried me away prisoner so far as he did and therefore desired his personal appearance to deny it if he could. He took no notice of it, but on the contrary he assured me I should have no satisfaction.

\* F. B. S., page 307—8.



and with his own hand took him 2 or 3 cuffs in the ear and turned him and all the prisoners he had took out of Goa".\*

#### CAUSES OF SEVAJI'S SUCCESS.

To-day his admirers are at liberty to say anything they like. But in the opinion of his contemporaries, whatever success he achieved was due chiefly to his cunning in which he had no rival in that age. Most of the contemporary writers were not favourably impressed by his military power and personal valour. "But it was known that Sevajy a man of spirit and cunning" wrote Martin, "achieved more by artifice than by open violence, that he had an understanding with the generals of the Mogal with whom he shared his spoils ; this was what sustained him."†

The same writer observed on receiving the news of Sevaji's death :

"The deceased could very well take a high place among the great men of India though the conquests he made during his life time have been accomplished rather by his intrigues and cunning than by open force." ‡.

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\* E. F. R. Vol. I, page 125.

† F. B. S. page 332.

‡ F. B. S. page 354.

In John L. Escalio's opinion "partly by fraud, partly by force, partly by corruption of king's governors, of king's castles, (he) seizeth many of them into his hands." \*.

In the opinion of his ardent admirer Abbe Carre he "rendered his name terrible to many a king who had experience of his arms or his intrigues which he conducted with equal skill."†

In short there was hardly any contemporary writer in whose opinion Sevaji did not owe his success to his cunning.

There were other factors also which rendered the task of Sevaji's opponents difficult. The physical features and the climatic conditions of his country made him very often inaccessible to them. The importance of this circumstances cannot be over-emphasized. The admirers of Sevaji speak of them with great force, and sometimes also with jubilation. But it is not clear how they add an iota of lustre to the supposed glory of his achievements. Bijapur could not offer any great resistance to him due to the constant Mughal menace, Ali Adil Shah's debauchery, the same monarch's premature death, and the accession

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\* E. F. R. Vol. I, page 73.

† F. B. S., page 217.

of a boy king to the throne, which gave birth to internecine quarrels and revolts of provincial governors. To these must be added the fact that the Bijapuris themselves very often considered Sevaji a bulwark against the Mughal invasion from the north. These circumstances made it easy for him, as Martin observed, to demoralise and foment division, amongst the Adil Shahi nobles.\* Not to speak of the latter, he bribed more than once even the Mughal Viceroy of the Deccan. Aurangzeb himself, being elsewhere busy could not apply himself to the solution of problems created by his rise until it was rather too late.

There is one more circumstance which historians have always overlooked. If Sevaji did anything for his countrymen it was to show them an easy way of procuring food. Robbery, howsoever detestable, provided the landless and luckless Marhatha with a sure and easy means of supplying himself with the necessities of life. "In those old days," said Gokhale to Sarkar "when the crops failed our people used to sally forth with their horses and spears and bring back enough booty to feed them for the next two or three

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\* F. B. S. page 341.

years."\* It was not conditional, it is submitted, upon the failure of crops, and was never so true as in the days of Sevaji himself. In fact it was he who gave this sort of robbery the force of tradition and impressed it with the stigma of national occupation. Formerly the Marhathas spent their time in internecine quarrels. He found an outlet for their energy and turbulent spirit by combining all those forces which had hitherto remained scattered. The greatness of Sevaji lay in his power organization, his capacity of mustering his men at the right time, marching them out in the right direction and striking his victims at the right place. This was what made him an ideal leader. He was generally successful in his designs; and if he failed, it brought no moral discredit to him in the eye of his men, who knew that they were following one who was after all a robber.

We will take this opportunity to say a word about the Marhatha forces under Sevaji. Much has been said about their simplicity, and the military establishments of the Mughals have been justly censured for their cumbrousness and clumsiness. But it should not be forgotten that it was not possible for them to be as

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\* Sarkar's Shivaji, pages 396 and 397.

unpretentious as the Marhatha forces. The latter had to subsist on daily plunder. The less encumbered they were the greater were the chances of their success. No wonder that they used to start from their place with a handful of rice. This was impossible for the Mughal forces. They were the servants of a monarch who claimed the land as his, and who, therefore, could not have allowed them to plunder his own subjects.

#### HIS GENERALSHIP

The admirers of Sevaji have compared him with Alexander, Caesar, Hannibal and Bonaparte. Prof. Jadunath Sarkar would like to call him "unconquerable hero." These praises are fantastic in their nature. Sevaji was not an extraordinary general. Considering the circumstances in which he was placed, it can be safely said that his opponents often furnished much better generalship, although he more than compensated this weakness through other means. Cruel and rapacious as he was by nature, his contemporaries noted that it was not of his business to risk open engagements unless the defenceless condition of the enemy made his success sure. Spirited gallantry of a higher order was no part

of his character. He took pride in attacking defenceless towns and cities, in robbing helpless merchants and poor peasants, and in cutting to pieces small solitary detachments. In the face of strong forces he would always prefer to run away. He never considered it disgraceful to show back to an enemy and retire from the field of action leaving him master of the day. He fleeced the people of Surat for four days but the first rumour of a coming army was sufficient to make him retire helter-skelter. Similarly a defenceless Karwar invited him in 1665, but the timely though unexpected arrival of Sher Khan was sufficient—at least for the time being—to save it from utter destruction at his hands. When faced by competent generals he did not generally come out successful. In the beginning of his career he was defeated by Nasiri Khan, was reduced to the sorriest straits by Siddi Jawhar, was put to flight by Khawas Khan, and brought to his knees by Jai Singh and Diler Khan.

It is a fashion with Sevaji's admirers to criticize the Mughals for being incompetent of reducing the Marhatha strongholds. The charge is not altogether unfounded. But, did Sevaji himself fare better in similar circumstances? His pride was humbled by a petty Desai woman.

He could not capture Valour without great delay. He could not reduce Jinji without employing unfair means. He disastrously failed in attempting to storm Panhala in 1666. It was his life long ambition to capture Janjira. But, despite his Herculean efforts, he failed as often as he attempted its conquest. Sabhasad compared the Siddi with a mouse. The repeated failure of Sevaji before that stronghold should serve to indicate how exaggerated are the views of modern historians in regard to his prowess. His contemporaries understood better the strength and weakness of his position. On 26-6-1664 wrote Surat to Karwar " . . . it is none of his business to lay siege to any place that is fortified against him, for it will not turn him to any account. He is and ever was for a running banquet and to plunder and burn those towns that have neither defence or guard . . . " \*

#### HIS CRUELTY

Maharashtra has not produced a more cruel and atrocious person than Sevaji. Considering his whole career at once, it is not too much to say that he lived on ruining his own motherland. In the course of his raids he put entire populations to

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\* E. F. R., Vol. I, page 89.



sword and burnt down to ground some of the most prosperous towns of the Deccan. Pain, misery, and torture, incidental to his excursions, frequent as they were, can be better imagined than described. However, an attempt has been made in this generation to show that Sevaji was mild and humane by disposition. The contemporary records are replete with the instances of barbarous punishments that he inflicted on his unfortunate victims. The following relate to the persons whom he had taken captive and who had no money to purchase their liberty. Revington and Taylor wrote from Sevaji's prison :

"Ced Kishnogy (Seth Krishnaji) that owes the Company 3400 Pagodas in Rajapur for cloth and lead is dead, drubbed to death in Khelna upon which news his wife poisoned herself in Rajapur".\*

In the same letter they observe: "The Nocquedah of the Surat Jounc (Junk) that came to Rajapur is in Khelna, where he had the strapado so barbarously given him, as that his hands and arms are dead and their use lost. Welgy's hands continued dead one month and was fed by another like a child.

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\* E. F. R. Vol. I, page 27.

"The like cruelty I believe was never known for men to be robbed of all and then to be wrackt for having no more. I pray God to deliver us from the hell we are in and from another".\*

The following lines taken from the Jedhe Kareena, as given in Shivaji Souvenir, page 57, amply prove Sevaji's faithlessness, treachery, and revengefulness which he could show to a fellow Marhatha. As the incident they describe speaks for itself we refrain from offering any comments on it :

"Kanhoji immediately repaired to the fort and begged Shivaji's pardon for Khopade. Shivaji, however, said "that Khopade is so wicked? He had no watan previously which I gave him under my seal. But Kedarji Khopade sought the protection of the Adil Shah, became disloyal to me, helped Afzal Khan in various ways and raised his hands against me. Hence he is a traitor whose body I order to be cut into four pieces for distribution to the four quarters. You have no business to intercede for him. I cannot pardon his wrongs." When in these words, Shivaji turned a deaf ear to all mediation, Kanhoji rose and submitted, "consider myself in the place of Khandoji

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\* E. F. R. Vol. I, page 29.

and that I have committed the offences and save his life". "Certainly" replied Shivaji, "I cannot disregard your petition *which I grant only on your account*. Bring that Khopade before me". Khandoji was then brought into Shivaji's presence. He saluted Shivaji, who said nothing to him. At this Kanhoji took leave of Shivaji and returned with Khopade to his residence below. Thereafter Khopade having been once introduced to Shivaji, repeated his visits independently of Kanhoji. In one of such visits Shivaji, who had not forgotten the wrong, had the right hand and the left foot of Khopade cut off. When the news of the punishment reached Kanhoji, he brought Khandoji to himself and after attending to his wounds went and saw Shivaji at the fort and strongly remonstrated with him, saying, how unjust it was to have punished Khopade after permitting him a fearless visit. "What is the value of my intercession" ? He concluded, to which Shivaji replied in sweet words: "it was for your intercession that I spared Khopade's life, only cutting of the hand which held the sword against me and the foot which carried him to the enemy. I have not deprived him of his watan which I will continue as before."

Historians, when they speak of Sevaji's plundering raids, do not generally depict the actual state of affairs—the intensity of pain and misery and the extent of desolation and death inevitably involved therein. It is written about his capture of the fort of Phonda that “he put all he found in it to the sword except the governor Mahmud Khan.” He is said to have “burnt Vingurla to the ground.” Mudhol experienced the same fate at his hands. And Karwar was destroyed so effectively that “he hath not left an house standing.” These were some of the most flourishing towns of the Deccan which suffered so terribly at the hands of that great destructive genius.

The enormities that he committed at Surat should constitute a separate chapter of Sevaji's biography. Very graphic accounts of the same exist in the despatches of English factors. Henry Gary wrote to Earl Marlborough on 26-6-1664 “he committed many cruelties by cutting off men's hands that could not give him so much money as he demanded.”\* Another writer recorded that he “continued a great deal of tyranny and cruelty to the townsmen, cutting off the hands of some and the heads of the others,

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\* E. F. R., Vol. I, page 65.

day and night robbing and burning down the city, until the 11th, which day he made a general round of fire about the town."\* The Reverend John L, Escaliot wrote to Sir Thomas Browne :

"His desire of money is so great that he spares no barbarous cruelty to extort confession from his prisoners, whips them most cruelly, threatens death, and often executeth it (if) they do not produce so much as he thinks they may or desires they should, at least cutt off one hand, sometimes both."†

The following extract will show how thoroughly had he attempted to destroy Surat :

"Thursday and Friday nights were the most terrible nights for fire. On Friday after he had ransacked and dug up Verge Vora's house he fired it and a great vast number more towards the Dutch house. A fire so great as turned the night into day, as before, the smoke in the day time had almost turned the day into night, rising so thick as it darkened the sun like a great cloud."‡

We hear about Sevaji's cutting off the hands of those who could not satisfy his demands. The

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\* E. F. R., Vol. I, page 63.

† E. F. R. Vol. I, page 78--79

‡ E. F. R., Vol. I, page 80.

following lines will give some idea of the pain and torture involved in the process:

"I had forgot to write you the manner of their cutting of men's hands, which was thus. The person to suffer is pinioned as straight as possibly they can, and then, when the nod is given a soldier comes with a whittle or blunt knife and throws the poor patient down upon his face, then draws his hand backward and sets his knee upon the prisoner's back and begins to hack and cut on one side and other about the wrist. In the meantime the poor man roaret exceedingly kicking and biting the ground for very anguish. When the villain perceives the bone to be laid bare on all sides he setteth the wrist to his knee and gives it a snap, and proceeds till he hath hacked the hand quite off; which done, they force him to rise and make him run so long till through pain and loss of blood he falls down. They then unpinion him and the blood stops."\*

What a sickening effect does the account produce. Sevaji was not only responsible for this barbarity, he was the sole author of it, and everything was done at his own command and under his own eyes.

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\* E. F. R. Vol. I, page 80.



Dr. Surendranath Sen has tried to disprove the story accepted by Prof. Jadunath Sarkar "that he (Sevaji) ordered the prisoners to be brought before him and cut off the heads of four and the hands of 24 others from among them at his caprice and spared the rest." He refers to the incident and remarks: "A soldier may be excused if he molests an unoffending inhabitant when a city is taken by assault, but a general who mutilates his helpless prisoners can never be forgiven. Shivaji was by common consent free from the vices of his time, it is believed he was never guilty of unnecessary cruelty, but if Sir Jadunath Sarkar's statement is accepted we shall have to revise our opinion about the Maratha hero."

His reasons for not believing the story are

"Bernier, Manucci, Thevenot and Carre do not corroborate the charge which is apparently based on the letters of L' Escalot and Gary, a letter addressed by the English President and Council at Surat to their masters at home and the log of the *Loyal Merchant*. The Dutch factors of Surat, so far as we can judge from the contemporary records at our disposal, do not corroborate their English neighbours in this particular charge against Shivaji . . . But a casual scrutiny of



these letters reveals that neither the President nor Priest, neither Gary nor the Captain of the *Loyal Merchant* witnessed the incident to which they all testify. None of them can, therefore, be regarded as corroborating others while they all derived their information from one common source, Mr. Anthony Smith, an English Factor, who was a prisoner for three days with the Marathas."

Dr. Sen attempts to show that Anthony Smith was not a man of integrity as a letter addressed to England shows that he had planned to betray the English factory to Sevaji, at the time of his invading Surat. Therefore, he concludes, the testimonies of the English President, Escaliot, etc., also fall to the ground.

As for Bernier, Carre, Manucci, and Thevenot, it is no wonder that they do not mention this particular incident in their accounts. They were not present at Surat at the time of Sevaji's invasion. Thevenot reached India only in 1666; Carre came two years later, Bernier published his "Travels" in 1670, while Manucci began his "Storia" about 40 years after the incident. They do not generally enter into such details as are found in the letters of L' Escaliot and others who were present at Surat at the time of the invasion and recorded their observations immediately after

the calamity had passed away. Their accounts breathe freshness, and, being absolutely contemporary, are of incomparable worth. Moreover, they do not say anywhere that they were indebted for their information to Anthony Smith alone. His name is mentioned in their despatches because he was one of them and that they had to report the fact of his imprisonment as an event which concerned their nation particularly. Thirdly, even before the invasion of Sevaji, it ought to have been known to them that Smith was a man of 'shady character' whose words should not be therefore relied upon. In the present circumstances it cannot be definitely said that the Dutch factors did not mention in their despatches the fact of Sevaji's cutting off the heads and hands of his prisoners. And, even if it be admitted for a moment that the latter have not really mentioned this fact in their despatches, the evidence of L' Escalot and others who support him is neither shaken nor its value necessarily reduced on that account. Besides what has already been said, we have strong evidence to prove that English reporters could have been informed of the incident not only by Anthony Smith, but had an independent and first hand source of information with them, and that their testimony very nearly

carries the weight of the evidence of an eye-witness. This will be borne out by the following extract:

"A very great many there were who, hearing of his (Sevaji's) coming went forth to him, thinking to fare the better, but found their fault to their cost; *as one who came to our house for cure.* He went forth to meet and told him he was come from about Agra with cloth and had brought 40 oxen loaded with it and that he came to present him with it all or else what part he should please to command. Sevaji asked him if he had no money. He answered that he had not as yet sold any cloth since he came to town; and that he had no money. The villain made his right hand to be cut off immediately and then bid him begone. He had no need of his cloth. The poor old man returns, finds the cloth burnt, and himself *destitute of other harbour comes to the English house where he is dressed and fed.*"\*

This one incident should be sufficient to show how cruelly, tyrannically, and barbarously did Sevaji behave toward his poor victims. Dr. Surendranath Sen believes "he was never guilty of unnecessary cruelty." These lines go a long way to prove how suitably did Sevaji

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\* E. F. R., Vol. I, page 79.

reward one who had unfortunately believed the same.

Nearly every modern historian has endeavoured to show that Sevaji was very solicitous of the welfare of women. It is still more ridiculous that the assertion is made on the authority of Khafi Khan who is called Sevaji's inveterate enemy. Below are quoted the relevant lines. These will show how erroneous is the interpretation attempted to be put to the words of that historian:

"But he (Sevaji) made it a rule that wherever his followers went plundering, they should do no harm to the mosques, the Book of God or the women of any one . . . When the women of any Hindu or Mohamedan were taken prisoners by his men, and they had no friend to protect them, he watched over them *until their relations came with a suitable ransom to buy their liberty.*"

These words are by themselves sufficient to show what Khafi Khan meant. They do not suggest anything more than this that Sevaji watched over the captured women because he hoped that their friends and relations would go to him "to buy their liberty." It must have been a regular source of income to him, and this consideration seems to have been shown only in the

hope of lucre. Obviously, had he allowed their modesty to be outraged, Indians being what they are, no one would have gone to him with a "suitable ransom".

If we accept the interpretation generally put to these words, we shall have to concede that Khafi Khan was more than fair to Sevaji. Sarkar, Sen, etc., have rejected his testimony whenever it is in conflict with that of Sevaji's contemporaries. There is no reason to accept it here as it is not only opposed to the contemporaneous evidence but is also contradicted by his own words. While describing the entry of Sevaji and his followers in the harem of Shaista Khan at Poona, the same historian writes : "They also attacked two of the Amir's women. One of them was so cut about that her remains were collected in a basket, which served for her coffin. The other recovered although she had received 30 or 40 wounds." \*

In the same way Sevaji's ardent admirer, Carre, describing the havoc that he created at Surat, observes :

"All of a sudden they fell upon whomsoever they found at hand *irrespective of age or sex*. They killed some of them, while the rest fled

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\* S. B. M., page 145.

away . . . There was no form of cruelty which they did not practise upon *women and old people* who had been detained in their lodgings through weakness or age." \*

The evidence of the Hindu writer of *Tarikh-i-Shivaji* is still more clear and cogent. Describing the murder of the Ghorpades he says :

"Immediately after getting the letter (of Shahji) Shivaji marched from Rajgarh to Parnalagarh, summoned the Mawals from all sides, assembled a strong force, and then making forced marches plundered and burnt down Mudhol. He captured and slew Baji Ghorpade with 3,000 of his soldiers, Baji's son Venkaji who was absent escaped with his life, but all other members of his family were put to death, *even the pregnant women*. Then Shivaji returned to Panala."†.

The above extracts should make it clear that there was no form of cruelty which Sevaji could not perpetrate upon women as well as men. It is difficult to give the sketch of his character better than in the following words of John L' Escalot :

"He (Sevaji) is distrustful, secret, subtle, cruel, perfidious, insulting over whomsoever he gets

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\* F. B. S., page 201.

† "The Modern Review," 1907, Pt. 2, page 282.

into his power, absolute in his commands and in his punishments more than severe, death or dismembering being the punishment of every offence ; if necessity requires venturous and desperate in execution of his resolves . . . \*

#### HIS ROBBERY.

The history of Sevaji is the history of his robberies. According to the standard of his time he began as a thief. His successes transformed him into a powerful robber ; and a robber he remained throughout his life. The exhaustive treatment of the subject is impossible within the short compass of this book. However such aspects of the matter will be brought to light as deserve attention more particularly.

In the beginning of his career, he was very often called thief and his doings thefts. Oxinden observed on 26th June, 1664 :

"Sevaji is so famously infamous for his notorious *thefts* that report hath made him an airy body and added wings . . ." †

In the same way, when, during his first invasion of Surat, Sevaji demanded Anthony Smith from English for the ransom fixed on his head, and, on being refused, threatened to deal with

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\* S. B. M. page 187.

† E. F. R. Vol. I, page 88.



them very cruelly the latter replied that "he was a rebel and a *thief* and therefore value not his threats." When the Company directed the Surat Council to come to terms with Sevaji, they observed in the reply:—"We know not what league to hold with a rebel and a perfidious *thief*."\* In a letter of English Factors of Bombay to Thomas Roach when he was at Agra, Sevaji was described as 'a plundering *thief*'† "and "an enemy of all people." In another letter of the same factory addressed to the Company, they, suspecting Muazzam to be in collusion with Sevaji, express their surprise at his boldness because "he marches now not before as a *thief* . . . and is not disturbed though the Prince lies near him."‡

It was not all in vain that people gave him this name. He entered the Harim of Shaista Khan at Poona as a daring thief, nay as a well trained burgler, and played his part with consummate ability.

Sevaji did not start from his place like kings and conquerors who consult only their own convenience. But poor and helpless as his victims

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\* E. F. R. Vol. I, page 84.

† E. F. R. Vol. I, page 308.

‡ E. F. R. Vol I, page 144.

generally were, his raids were timed according to the circumstance he hoped to find them in. It has already been shown how he utilized the Hindu festivals for the purposes of robbery. Secondly, it was the harvest time which suited with his purpose most. Crops being ready people could not even run away to jungles leaving their fields to the tender mercies of his hordes. An excursion at that time was the easiest and the surest way of fleecing out of the unfortunate peasants their hard-earned money. Those who would not pay or could not pay due to their inability and repaired to jungles for the sake of their lives, found, on their return, their crops cut and removed or burnt, their cattles driven away, and their houses reduced to ashes. Those who were caught, if unable to purchase their liberty, were dealt with barbarously or were carried away and imprisoned in some distant Marhatha castle and subjected to all those hardships which Seth Krishnaji and the Nakhuda of the Surat Junk had to bear. (See page 188).

It was Sevaji's excellent spy system which deserves our attention next. Like a true robber, that he was, he used to be informed through his scouts, when still hundreds of miles away, even about the concealed wealth of his victims

and obtained it often by digging the floor of their house. More than once the treasury house of the Company was dug and cash and valuables removed.

Thirdly we have to note the plight of the country caused by Sevaji's robbery. The following lines taken from the letter of an eye witness graphically describe the state of affairs :

"In the high way we passed by many dead bodies of men and women that died for want of food. The way in many places very deep so that our houses in some places ready to stick fast. Such towns we passed much broken and decayed, a few or no people in them. While one house had a dweller ten were empty, the people being run away for want and fear of Sevaji and oppressions of their governor." (E. F. R., Vol. II., page 63).

Fourthly, we have to note the moral effects of Sevaji's robbery. Very large was the number of those who followed his train as enlisted soldiers, mercenaries, and camp followers. All of them robbed and plundered with him. Larger must have been the number of those who were robbed and who having lost their all, became bandits in their turn. Yet there was another class of robbers. These were inland zamindars and Rajas. Whether themselves looted or not, their humour was

infected by Sevaji's robberies and they plundered the country right and left in his name, although they were not connected with him. References to their doings are found in the records of English factories. It was observed after his flight from Agra :

" . . . Deccan is alarmed again and robberies committed in sundry places in Sevaji's name, when he is far enough off . . . , " \*

Similarly the factors of Surat recorded in 1670 :

"The many troubles which at this time the whole kingdom groans under hath rendered the wayes and passages up into the country very unsafe and dangerous, the thieves and inland Rajahs taking this opportunity of plundering caphilas and robbing merchants, and all under the name of Sevagy." †

#### ITS EFFECT ON TRADE.

As English factors were themselves merchants, their letters very clearly show how adversely did the rise of Sevaji affect the commerce of this country. On 21st January 1678 Surat wrote to the Company

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\* E. F. R., Vol. I, page 116.

† E. F. R., Vol. I, page 145.

"Your Deccan Factories which are Karwar and Rajapur, are become so inconsiderable, specially the last, through the ruin and destruction that reigns in those countries by Sevaji's robberies that we are fully resolved to withdraw your servants from the last."\*

In an earlier letter to the Company they had observed:

"The country all in a combustion; no trading nor civil commerce."†

The same factors wrote to St. George on 21st June, 1676.

...all trade is impeded and our factors complain that their cloth investments are at a stand by reason they can get no weavers to settle to work."‡

Karwar wrote to Surat on 29th June, 1678 :  
 "By what we understand in the broker's letters there is little likelihood of procuring any quantity of goods this year or vending much of your goods, Sevaji's forces being robbing and plundering all over these parts in the chief towns of note where our cloth is made, as Moolgund, Luckmisseer, Gudduck and so that dare not as yet give out a

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\* E. F. R. Vol. II, page 192.

† E. F. R. Vol. I, page 34.

‡ E. F. R. Vol. II, page 92.

farthing of moneys to the weavers, for the fear of it being plundered from them if times aloft be not settled, heart of merchandise and commerce will be quite broke. There remaining but, little else aloft (or left) more when plundering and robbing one from another, everyone seeking the fresh opportunity in these distracted times, i. e., strongest to enrich himself by impoverishing them of less force, making the old proverb good that (the) weakest must go to the wall".

Four days latter the same Factors wrote to Surat :

"What remains below with us cannot sell a pie worth, here being not a merchant in these parts dare be seen to buy anything considerable, if should, Sevaji would soon empty his coffers." On 13th August, 1678, Surat wrote to Rajapur :

"Our friends at Karwar (who are under the same Government) give us no encouragement to expect a piece of goods from them this yeare declaring the country about Hubly to be still under the tyrannical operation of Sevaji's officers and in as great a confusion as ever".

The following few words of a letter written from Bombay to Surat on 6th December, 1670, would show how Sevaji was looked upon in regard to the trade of the country :

"We thank your honour, etc., for your jealous care of us in fearing *that general enemy to trade* Sevaji, attempt anything against this island."\*

### HIS POPULARITY

Mr. Savarkar is at liberty to say that Sevaji was everywhere hailed as a deliverer of the Hindus. In the contemporary records there is not a word to support this assertion. On the other hand there is much to show that he was extremely unpopular everywhere. For instance, the news of his incarceration at Agra was universally applauded. The Factors of Surat wrote to the Company :

"The grand rebel Sevaji is at least entrapped and caught in the same net of glorious promises that he was won't to make for others."†

His subsequent escape caused a widespread consternation. Randolph Taylor wrote to John Stanyan :

"In my former I advised you of Sevaji's being under restraint at this King's Court whence he quickly after made an escape and we hear now is in his country upon which Deccan is alarmed again . . . . ."

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\*E. F. R. Vol. I, page 184.

† E. F. R., Vol. I, page 114.

‡ E. F. R., Vol. I, pages 115-116.



On 22nd January, 1667, the Surat Factors wrote to the Company :

"The country of Deccan is still in great troubles and there is little hopes of any settlement, especially now that the rebel Sevaji escaped and got into his country again".\*

Hearing of Muazzam's going with a strong army against Sevaji, of Bijapur's victory over him and of Sambhaji's running away from him to Diler Khan, the Factors of Surat wrote to the Company :

"If these things be true, we may hope for more quietness and security from this great disturber of this part of the world than hath been for many years heretofore".†

His death was supposed to have brought still greater relief. Bombay wrote to Surat :

"Sevaji is for certain dead and his son Sambhaji hath now almost possession of all his father had . . . The country begins to be a little settled."‡

Even Sambhaji who is so well-known for his outrages was welcomed as a better substitute. The Surat Council wrote about him that his

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\* E. F. R. Vol. I, page 119.

† E. F. R., Vol. II, page 193.

‡ Ibid, Vol. II, page 313.

"present proceedings seem to speak him to be of a contrary spirit and temper to his father, by a much more moderate and humane Government; therefore could have heartily wished your honour had left us power to have continued your factory of Karwar, that country now beginning to breathe towards a settlement."\*

#### HIS GOVERNMENT

Dr. Vincent Smith very aptly called the Marhatha State "Robber State". As already pointed out Sevaji was more of a robber than of a general or statesman, much less of a Prince. He could not have possibly dispensed with all forms of government because without some such organization it would not have been possible for him to carry on his campaigns of robbery and plunder on such a large scale as he did. There is evidence on record to prove that Sevaji and his men themselves admitted his failure in discharging the obligations of a ruler. Niraji an official of Sevaji told Oxinden at the eve of his coronation: "When the Raja was crowned he would act more like a king by taking care of his subjects . . . "† According to the Dutch writers Sevaji was invested by the Brahmans with

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\* E. F. R. Vol. II, page 317.

† F. B. S., page 448.

the insignia of royalty only after "he had promised to not act or rule tyrannically and badly *as before*\* However there is nothing to show that the lot of people in his dominions actually improved after the coronation.

Raigarh, the capital of Sevaji, to-day inspires the youngmen of Maharashtra with its supposed ancient grandeur and magnificence. However, those who visited it in the days of Sevaji himself were not favourably impressed. Thomas Niccolls who saw it in 1673 spoke of it as a "miserable dirty town" made up of "poor ill built houses".† Henry Oxinden who visited it one year later at the time of Sevaji's coronation, when according to Sir Jadunath Sarkar "the citizens had decorated their houses and roads in a manner worthy of the occasion" found it such a "pott dry place and barren of all things that were there no other argument on our side to press him to a speedy conclusion that would sufficiently promote us to use all means possible for a speedy despatch".‡

Sevaji and his men would feel no shame in acknowledging that they were robbers. There is nothing extraordinary in a civilized governments'

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\* F. B. S., page 387.

† F. B. S., page 413.

‡ F. B. S., page 446.

making good the loss of country or foreign merchants suffered by them due to the turbulence or indiscipline of its soldiery. But Sevaji's standard of government was very different. What his envoy said to the English Factors in course of negotiations that took place between them and Sevaji in regard to the famous Rajapur indemnity was thus reported : " . . . his master hath robbed several kings and princes and many merchants. But never made any satisfaction ; and what he now offers to us is purely out of a desire of friendship with the English."\*

Merchants would not trust their person and property in Sevaji's hands. Bombay wrote to Surat in December, 1676:—

"Our endeavours would prove but vain should we use them in the persuading the diamond merchants to settle on your island, for so long as the opposite main continues in possession of Sevaji Raja no argument would prevail with them to trust their bodies or estate in the passage through his country and thereby shall suspend the affair until some fairer opportunity offers."†

Sevaji's soldiers used to rob his own subjects. The English Factors of Surat in a letter

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\* E. F. R., Vol. I, page 292.

† E. F. R., Vol. II, page 191.

to their brethren of St. George, after speaking of the miserable condition of Bijapur caused by the frequent quarrels of the grandees of that kingdom wrote about Sevaji's subjects that they were similarly distressed "through the frequent robberies and oppressions of *his* army."\*

Sevaji's revenue officers were corrupt, deceitful, and extortionate. Fryer speaks about them in the following words:

"They are neither for public good or common honesty but their own private interest only. They refuse no base offices for their own commodity inviting merchants to come and trade among them and then rob them or else turmoil them on account of customs, always in a corner getting more for themselves than their master, yet openly must seem mighty zealous for their master's dues : so that trade is unlikely to settle where he (Sevaji) hath anything to do . . . "†

Taxes were abnormally high in Sevaji's dominion. The government used to take two fifths of the gross produce. Even cows and buffaloes were taxed. Fryer, who compared Sevaji's subjects with slaves, says that land was forced upon them on double the former rates.

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\* E. F. R., Vol. II, page 92.

† S. B. M., page 220.

Those who refused to accept it, if moneyed, were carried to prison and tortured mercilessly. Writes he :

"It is a general calamity and much to be deplored, to hear the complaints of the poor people that remain or are compelled to endure the slavery of Sevaji. The Desais have land imposed upon them at double the former rates, and if they refuse to accept it on these conditions (if moneyed men) they are carried away to prison, there they are famished almost to death ; wracked and almost tortured most inhumanly till they confess where it is. They have now in limbo several Brachmins whose flesh they tear with pincers heated red hot, drub them on the shoulders to extreme anguish (though according to their law it is forbidden to strike a Brachmin)."\*

Sevaji does not seem to have understood the value of peace and the worth of security of property in his dominions. He got himself crowned king, but his deeds unmistakably show that his aspirations never carried him beyond the limits of a robber's ambition. Dr. Fryer's observations on this point deserve to be quoted.

"Nor has he (Sevaji) done this injury to them

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\* S: B. M., page 220.

(Bijapuris) alone but the Mughal hath the same measure up as far as Surat, so that he enjoys them wholly excepting what the Portugals have, and the English at Bombaim ; which are of no import in respect of trade, while caphalaes are hindered to pass those ways ; of which did he know or consider the advantage he might amass greater treasures, than he purchases by pillaging and pilfering, and might come off with the glorious name of a conqueror, whereas otherwise, following his barbarous courses of fire and sword, he merits no more than to be branded as a thief ; witness those intolerable cruelties, devastations and deserts made by him everywhere in his range up and down in the Mughal territories, as well as in the Duccanean (Bijapuri)" \*

#### COMPARED WITH BIJAPUR.

It is commonly believed that the government of Sevaji was an improvement upon that of Bijapur. Without entering into the details of their administrations, we most respectfully submit that there is no justification for holding this view. The success of a government should be measured according to the peace it confers upon its subjects and the prosperity they enjoy. Now there is nothing on record to

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\* S. B. M., pages 222—223.



suggest that subjects of Bijapur did not enjoy peace, which can be inferred from the flourishing state of commerce prior to Sevaji's rise. The very existence of the foreigners' trading factories is sufficient to prove that life and property were secure under the Adil Shahi government.

The rise of Sevaji created the state of chaos and confusion. The following extract taken from a letter despatched from Karwar to Surat on 29th June, 1678, shows the prosperous state of the country prior to Sevaji's advent as well as the degeneration of the Bijapuri's :

"We heartily wish the forces of the grand rebel and great disturber of the felicity of Deccan, *which formerly so famously flourished in all manner of trade*, may retire to their strong holds, or be once totally routed by the Deccan armies which are reported ready in Vizapur, but thinks besotted, for whilst they lie effeminately at house fearful of wetting their tender skins, *our Maharaja (Sevaji) plays his game so wisely, as to destroy, rob, plunder, devastate and ruin the major and the best part of their kingdom*".\*

The following lines taken from a letter of Childe which he wrote from Surat to Bombay on 10th Jan. 1677, show how an intelligent

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\* E. F. R., Vol. II, page 166.

contemporary writer contrasted the blessings of the government of Bijapur with the misrule and tyranny of Sevaji :

"The Vizapore people have not in the least disturbed us but used us with all imaginable kindness ; but as for Sevaji Raja, how firm his firmans have proved your honour is sensible of, but that he will ever rob us in his own country, there appears no fear or suspicion for it".\*

Even in those districts which were formally incorporated in Sevaji's dominion there was neither peace nor security. People used to be apprehensive of the motive and distrustful of the intention of his governor. The following lines taken from a letter despatched from Karwar to Bombay on 22nd August, 1675, show not only their discontent and want of confidence in Sevaji's government but also the peace of mind and security of property they had enjoyed in the days of Bijapur :

"We may bless God that we have a house that is of force sufficient to defend from their (Sevaji's governors and soldiers') rapine and plunder, for do not question if we were at their mercy, as we was (were ?) at the Moor's times we were on the

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\* E. F. R., Vol. II, page 105.

other side (our tottering house being rather an offence than defence) we had long ere this devested of all".\*

The following lines taken from a letter despatched from Karwar to Bombay on 1st July, 1675, indicate the unmistakable popularity of the Bijapur rule as well as the state of chaos and confusion created by the Marhathas in Kanara :

"Our troubles are renewed daily and we can never expect the factory to flourish as long as it is under Sevaji's government ; they have robbed all the country people so much as to the seed they should sow, so that the next year the men will be ready to eat one another for the new crop will be very small. All people pray that the Moors may come and regain the country and there is a rumour they will come after the rains."†

Enough has been said about the hatred, detestation, and contempt in which Sevaji was held. Indians have always been famous for the love of their kings. In the following lines the English Factors of Surat give expression to the feelings of love and sentiments of loyalty of the subjects of the Adil Shah no less than to the gush of their own emotions. Having

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\* E. F. R., Vol. II, page 67.

† E. F. R., Vol. II, page 59.

made large profits in the days of peace and prosperity conferred on the land by his forefathers, and finding themselves compelled to dissolve their much loved Rajapore factory on account of the extortion of Sevaji's government and robbery of his soldier, they give vent to their grief in the following words:

"... Karwar we shall continue in hope that part lying further from Sevaji's strength may sooner be riddened to its former settlement and security under the King of Vizapore, who we are advised by his generals hath had some hopeful successes against him (Sevaji) in a battle, and wherein it should please God to prosper him so as to recover those parts of his kingdom a present possessed by Sevaji and able to protect and secure then we may hope to see trade flourish there more than formerly."\*

Lastly we rely on the impartial testimony of Fryer who observed.

"... Under the King of Visiapour (Bijapur) the taxations were much milder and they (Sevaji's subjects) lived with far greater comfort."†

Having shown that taxes under Sevaji's rule were hard, troublesome, and embarrassing, that

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\* E. F. R., Vol. II, page 192.

† S. B. M., page 221.

his revenue officers were corrupt and deceitful, and that his soldiers used to rob his own subjects, we humbly submit that these words of Fryer are more than enough to prove the superiority of the Adil Shahi administration.

In spite of everything that has been said we are second to none in admiring Sevaji for his leadership, organizing capacity, and boldness. His frugality, industry, and perseverance deserve very high praise. For his audacity of conception and resourcefulness he had no match in that age. It was no mean achievement that he challenged the mighty Mughal Empire under Aurangzeb and carried on his robberies for such a long time. Despite what it was certain events of his life exercise a peculiarly charming influence upon one's imagination. Who will not like to be told the story of his almost miraculous escape from Agra? The account of how he surprised Shasta Khan in the midst of his gigantic camp at Poona is no less amusing. The story of his life when considered superficially may not be so repulsive and disgusting as given in this book. This is all that can be said in his favour; for when our attention is drawn to the original sources for a detailed study of his deeds and character we find him portrayed as a treacherous robber, ruthless plunderer, and cold blooded murderer.

## APPENDIX A

## 'TO PRETEND'

Lest our interpretation of the word 'pretend' on pages 134—138 should be considered bold we want to invite attention to Murray's *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*. It would seem that this word has been used at different times in no less than sixteen senses. Below we are giving those lines from it which may seem to support Prof. Sarkar's view of Revington's letter :

- "3 (b) To put forth an assertion or statement . . . about oneself ; **now** usually implying mere pretension without foundation : to feign to be or do something (A leading modern sense).
4. To give oneself out as having (something), to profess to have, make profession, proff. (a quality, etc.) **now** always used in a **bad** sense : To proff. falsely, to feign some quality.
7. To put forward as an assertion or statement to allege ; **now** especially to allege or declare falsely with intent to deceive (a leading current sense)".

These lines very clearly show that according to the learned compilers it is only *now* that 'Pretend' has come to usually imply 'mere pretension without foundation', or to mean 'to allege, or declare falsely or with intent to deceive'. Further it is suggested by '*now*' that formerly this word was not always used in a **bad** sense.

The following lines taken from the same dictionary substantiate our opinion :

- (5) To put forth or lay a claim to (a thing), to assert as a right or possession ; to claim; obs;
- (6) To put forward as a reason to excuse ; to use as a pretext ; to allege as a ground or reason .
- (8) To intend, purpose, design, plan, obs.
- (9) To aspire to, to undertake, to venture, presume, to attempt, endeavour, try, . . .
- (11) To indicate, signify, import, mean obs.

The following sentences which are quoted in the same dictionary clearly show that in 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries 'pretend' was used to denote honest representation.

C. 1450 trs. De Imitatione iii. xix 115. Lord, what may. I **righteously** pretend against ye, if thou do not but ask.

C. 1481. Caxton Myor (iii) xx, 168. Who pretendeth to god, God attendeth fo him.

C. 1530 Palsgr, 665/2. He pretendeth to be my friend **but** doth the **worst** for me that he can.

C. 1621—23. Middleton and Rowley Changeling iv, ii 91. To that wench I pretend **honest** love and she deserves it.

C. 1633 T. Adams. Exp. 2. Peter, ii. 20.

Though we pretend for heaven, yet still we bear about us a twang of our native country.

It has been shown on pages 135—6 that Prof. Sarkar's interpretation renders the narrative of Revington illogical. These sentences are, therefore, sufficient to show that Revington did not use the word 'pretend' with a view to ascribe any bad motive to Afzal Khan.



## APPENDIX B.

## ERRATA.

PAGE	LINE	READ	FOR
ix	21	tree	... free
xiv	11	is	... in
16	27	2	... ii
17	25	40	... xl
22	15	May this	May it
32	24	15 and 82	... 14 and 8
"	26	page 15	... page 18
33	15	paper	... water
39	1	whatsoever	it whatsoever
		may	
41	30	page 161	... page 157
42	29	page 197	... page 160
44	4	as far back	... as back
45	30	page 410	... page 411
47	8	unassisted	... unassisted
73	8	of being	... of his being
76	1	carrying out...	carrying on
84	4	carried out	... carried on
"	14	out his	... on his
101	15	out the	... on the
107	27	suddenly	... suddenly
122	15	of having	... for having
136	25	very clear	... abundantly
			clear
144	17	by an air	... by the air .

PAGE	LINE	READ	FOR
145	24	despite being	despite his being
146	1	of having ...	of his having
148	5	at least into ...	at least in
153	20	with jubilation	with apparent jubilation
154	10	clearly prove	abundantly prove
155	16	from one ...	for one
155	8	of murdering	for murdering
161	18	of treacherously	for treacherous- ly
166	24	he has not ...	he was not
171	17	to popular ...	to the popular
172	10	followed by the	followed the
180	10	consideration	cosideration
182	16	this circums- tance	this circums- tances
191	21	25th Jan. 1664:	26-6-1664
193	21	this account...	the account
202	3	threats"* ...	threats"
202	7	<i>thief</i> " ...	<i>thief</i> "*

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THE END

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